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THE CELESTIAL KEYS

The Celestial Keys

By

Ireleda Sibbrena

"Rise, man! thine is the earth by right,
The oppressèd land redress:
If thou but knew, thou hast the might
All blessings to possess."

Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd.
Dryden House, Gerrard Street, London, W.
1909

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In Memoriam

1809—1909

"When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see;
Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be——."

DEDICATED TO
MY YOUTH'S INSPIRATION—
MY INTELLECTUAL MENTOR

210057

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INTRODUCTION

This book makes no pretence to learned disquisition. It is not addressed to the student or the thinker whose reflections on this much vexed problem may naturally lead to logical conclusions thereon; nor yet is it expected to appeal to those traditional-bound minds who carefully avoid all literature calculated to shake the "faith of their forefathers"—seeming not to surmise that the proof of real strength lies in its testing, and that a faith that can be shaken must necessarily stand on a shaky foundation.

It is not for these last, surely, that I have written. Had I, the effort would be vain. First, because spiritual "conviction" is as yet but a matter of *sentiment*. The undisciplined mind believes what it wants to believe. Second, because belief of any abstract nature is a very fair gauge of a mental status. In the religious world, consequently, where all is yet confusion and uncertainty, that which a given intellect is

able to accept is good enough for such intellect for the time being.

We cannot forget that a man's "religion" is his inspiration—that which keeps up the soul's moral tone. Therefore the cruellest fate that can befall an individual is to be robbed of his "faith" without receiving something satisfactory in its place. Moreover, such iconoclastic tendencies are responsible for much of the "social degeneracy" stalking abroad to-day. When the moral standards, once the boast of a people, are too abruptly attacked, the most conspicuous results of such belittling effort, usually, is to bring into relief the crude reality of individual and collective imperfections hitherto suppressed, or disciplined by the dominant presence of an ideal. It is then that the unrestrained claims of sense come to the social surface, and moral turpitudes ignored or carefully concealed before, are shamelessly flaunted—a thousand and one sophistries being advanced in palliation thereof.

Many of these iconoclastic processes go to show, unquestionably, that the outlook of our would-be innovators is not yet high enough to take in the whole spiritual landscape. Grasping but the fact that old theologies are losing ground, they proceed to attack them, and that

in a manner often calculated to arouse a spirit of resistance to restraint of any kind.

Let us be slow, then, to attack an individual's *belief,* for so long as our theologies stand for religion, it is—to say the least—dangerous, by destroying all incentive to moral restraint, to deprive society of the only moral resource commensurate with the gigantic task of controlling and elevating the masses. Again, an important fact which agitators appear to lose sight of is that mental states are not rapidly modified. Two great controlling factors entering into the constitution of man, and which may be said to determine his personality, are the stomach and the brain. What man eats makes him physically, and what man thinks makes him mentally. When we consider that humanity has been thinking as well as eating badly since the beginning of time, is it fair to expect sudden transformations in spheres of such ingrained heredity? The adult seldom sheds the moral clothing of early years. Principles absorbed with a mother's milk become part of the bone and marrow of the individual soul, and the mental disposition manifested at twenty is apt in ninety-nine hundredths of cases to follow the individual through life—those rare instances of originality indicative of strong intel-

lectual personality being rare enough to prove the rule.

Man, therefore, may be said to be *born* into his religion as he is born into his nationality; and he takes it in much the same matter-of-course way. He believes in his country because he has been taught to do so, and he believes in his God for the same reason. His personality, his ambition, his very existence, even, are twined and intertwined with these two leading ideals. He will swear by both unhesitatingly—defending them, if need be, at the cost of his life.

Beware, then, how you invade this—albeit benighted—spiritual sanctuary with desecrating, destructive intent. The subject of your "illuminating" effort may be poor in purse, but such poverty becomes insignificant, indeed, compared with that poverty of soul that must follow when you have taken away his God.

To be sure, this is but one side of a very many sided subject, and applies mainly to that vast majority of the great human family who do not think for themselves on any universal question. We know that society's onward march has necessarily to be at the expense of many of these household gods. Thus it has ever been in every successive era; but it is

folly to cause needless pain, and worse than folly to pursue reformative measures which are likely to defeat the very principle at stake.

When these, the several classes to whom this book is not addressed, are eliminated, the circle of its prospective readers is narrowed indeed. Still, if it is happy enough to succeed in throwing the least bit of light into a realm which to such seems now all darkness, it will have accomplished its purpose. Nothing, it is well to repeat, leaves one more desolate than the obscuring of the soul's starry heavens. Material ills come and go—a loss to-day may be compensated for by a gain to-morrow—but in that realm of the Great Unknown, where a spiritual compass of some sort has come to be, and should be, indispensable, to find one's self adrift, as it were, without even the guiding star of a "belief" is, to certain minds at least, the desolation of desolation.

PART I

CHAPTER I

THE CELESTIAL KEYS

> "*I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*"—MATTHEW xvi. 19.

THOSE CELESTIAL KEYS! What of them? Where are they?

Does their divinely conferred power of two thousand years ago still prevail? If so, why "these blank misgivings of a creature moving about in worlds not realised"? If not, where is the modern key that shall unlock the mystic door at whose portals a modern humanity stands questioning?

Not since the traditional days of Peter, into whose saintly hands were given, we are told, the keys of Paradise—that whatsoever he

should bind on earth should be bound in heaven, and whatsoever he should loose on earth should be loosed in heaven—have there been more serious misgivings regarding the efficacy of that sacred trust and all it implies.

Faith, the mighty pillar and stronghold of the spiritual edifice of which Peter was elected to be the corner-stone, and which has been a refuge and a beacon-light to Christendom through the centuries, is to-day tottering on foundations discovered to be crumbling away. That which for generations has been believed to be *eternal* is finally giving evidence of the disintegrating touch of Time.

What does this signify?

Why have the words "Christian" and "religion" come to be bandied lightly on profane tongues? Why are the wholesome restraints these same words once exercised gradually relaxing their hold on society? And why is it that "science," in contradistinction to religion, has become a modern watchword for the confounding of every claim to spirituality and the destruction of ideals cherished hitherto as the very bulwarks of a Christian civilisation?

It is the tremendous problems involved in these questions that hold the attention of the

world to-day, giving rise to myriad conflicting arguments, inspiring volumes of contradictory literature, and creating an atmosphere of social unrest which has penetrated to the ranks of the most humble.

And multitudinous as are the efforts to meet the exigencies of the case, none seem to avail. A kind of spiritual phyloxera, one might say, has settled down upon the spiritual vineyard of our overwrought civilisation, and the thousand and one prescriptions of anxious, would-be physicians bring no relief. Neither the impassioned pulpit appeal nor the ingenious pulpit device (bringing into the church "worldly" attractions looked upon but a few decades since as irreligious), in the hope of galvanising into new life a declining Church interest, can avail. No more, on the other hand, can the hard "materialist"—bent on reducing the troublesome phenomenon called SOUL to a simple interaction of blind forces.

From whatever source the effort may come the situation would seem to be one defying remedy—that is, so long as it continues to be approached in the spirit of *remedy*. For this is a sickness unto death.

Let those disposed to dispute the fact look about them.

Is there a *living* faith in, and practice of the precepts of what we call "religion" anywhere in Christendom to-day? Do you not hear it constantly repeated that were Christ to return to earth He would verily be without "where to lay His head"? Do you know of a single biblical admonition regarding wealth, morality, spirituality, sensuality, that is *actually* respected? What think you of a Rockefeller's millions, with a Rockefeller *teaching Bible-class* in a community where it is *possible* to find HUMAN beings stultified by poverty, cold, and hunger!

Is there to be discovered anywhere in all this the merest suggestion of *Christian* principle?

"Alas! yes," I hear. "It must be admitted that the world has wandered away from Christly teachings; that is precisely our contention. But the trouble is not radical; it is only the swing of the moral pendulum under distracting worldly influences. The reaction is sure to come, and with it the revivifying spirit."

This lifelessness in the Church has been likened to the night, to be followed by a brighter day, and our general moral disruption to an earthquake shaking the faithful from their worldly torpor.

It is but natural that those whose life interests are involved in the old order of things should hope and *believe* (so easy is it to believe what one hopes for) that the actual situation is of passing character; but the disinterested observer will scarcely refuse to admit that the present psychological upheaval is vastly more serious than is thus confidently assumed. In which case its ultimate results must prove more far-reaching than any upheaval in Nature. When the physical earthquake is over, what is left of the terrified victims may go back, patch up the chasm, and go on as before. Not so here. A healthy intellect never goes back. When a mental clothing is once outgrown, that is the end of it: never is it taken on again. This present case is one of discarded mental clothing—or to be exact, clothing in process of being discarded. It is, therefore, that there is *no* "remedy"; for the garment will bear patching no longer.

Only when society thoroughly grasps this momentous fact, and comes verily to realise that it stands on the threshold of a new psychological era — of which present disquieting sounds are but the legitimate throbs—will it begin to understand the *malady* in question

and to deal with it in a manner commensurate with the necessities of the case.

This civilisation of which so much has been boasted, and justly; under whose banner humanity has risen higher and advanced more rapidly than under any other, has evidently done its work. To the careful student of actual psychological conditions nothing can be more apparent than that our society is in a state of transition. From such standpoint alone may be explained this breaking-up of time-honoured institutions, this growing discredit of things once sacred—old creeds and doctrines, the very foundation of our collective social life.

Metaphorically speaking, the collective human snake is shedding its theological skin, and the process is painful. The skin sticks and breaks in places, while the new growths may often appear too rapid, creating inequalities—disorders of various sorts—which tend to render the general organism unsightly and very uncomfortable. And to those not understanding the meaning of the unsightly spectacle it is dreadful indeed. Among such, certain there are who, with the best of intention, undertake to patch up the ghastly holes; others, in a spirit of irritation, criticise and scold the poor creature in its transitional throws. (Wit-

ness the late papal demonstration in France!) Alas! no arresting effort can stay the vital process. Our subject in its present state can be reached neither by reformer nor by iconoclast. "Reform" is no longer in order, and *destruction* ruthlessly strews but ruin in its wake. Therefore the signal failure of these two classes of social hygienists who have been at work on their subject for many years: the one by its hard blows making the world tremble and stand aghast; the other by its multiple reformatory schemes adding, often, to the complications of the growing disorder.

For, it must be remembered, this spirit of unrest is not of to-day only, nor of yesterday. Questions of like gravity move through centuries before they become compelling enough to force recognition. The controversy which has culminated in this our modern disruption began officially with Luther. With him it took organic shape, and as such advanced slowly from generation to generation through the various orthodox sects to which Protestantism gave rise—each particular shade of theological development being an expression of some new theological perception, and each serving as a stepping-stone in the steep collective ascent.

True, many fantastic, discordant notes have

mingled in the great theological anthem. Many false prophets have arisen to mislead the "faithful"; but notwithstanding, for four hundred years the main stream of theological evolution has flowed steadily on—constantly overflowing its bigoted boundaries, growing in human sentiment and growing out of sectarian egoism, until finally, at the close of the nineteenth century, we were able to witness that unprecedented theological phenomenon, "a Congress of Religions," uniting upon one platform—irrespective of creed—representatives of the Divine from all peoples. What an immeasurable distance this from the Spanish Inquisition, the martyrdom of Wickliffe, or the burning of the "Salem witches"! Who, in fact, that has followed Church policy of late years has not had occasion to remark the very general tendency in the Protestant world to efface denominational differences? Sectarian lines, once so taught that to attempt to jump them was to risk a theological tumble, are now theoretically prone. It cannot yet be said that the holier-than-thou sentiment is *dead,* but it is certainly held in abeyance. The Church has grown ashamed of it, and keeps it hidden away among its other "sacred relics." Before the world, it is under the banner of *Christian*

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brotherhood, regardless of creed, that our modern Churches operate and co-operate on all questions of common interest.

So far, so good. This very patent modification of the old ecclesiastical policy is among the happy signs of modern progress that is going on in society's most conservative spheres. Still, it does not render any less intricate the spiritual labyrinth through which the modern world is striving to make its way. Existing theologies, however modified, bring no solution to actual spiritual problems ; and if something is not done towards putting society on the right track regarding these vital questions of traditional belief, its disquieting conditions can but increase. If we cannot discover the bedrock of a rational basis upon which to build a fresh interpretation of the soul's eternal, unquenchable aspiration, it may well be said of humanity's present state, that it is " worse than the first." For, what with the swelling tide of materialism—the free scope and encouragement of the undisciplined senses—on the one hand ; and on the other the plausible religious pretender, seizing upon conventional credulity to advance personal interests, the reign of spiritual anarchy is already well-nigh established.

Strange as it may seem, too, it is the last of these distracting elements that is the most difficult to deal with. Materialism—so-called—stands for an avowed fact, and can be boldly confronted, whereas the "inspired" prophet comes clothed in mystery: his claim is supposed to transcend the means of human investigation. He is therefore invincible. Thus liberated from the ordinary, restraining effects of contemporary judgment—so long as he maintains the protecting authority of the Holy Book itself—the prophet enjoys unlimited scope in his juggling with biblical texts. It is upon biblical authority that a Brigham Young may plant with impunity his one-sided immorality on the soil of a Christian nation; and upon the same indisputable ground a Dowie is able to support his nefarious pretensions, till a community is actually built upon them, and scores of "disciples" yield him reverential fealty, not to mention the pecuniary benefits flowing thereby into his dishonest hands. Upon biblical authority, likewise, is builded a *scientific* Christianity (necessarily devoid of science), whose most salient feature is the exaltation of the founder's personality —till it becomes a matter of public interest whether or no she still lives.

And nobody thinks, apparently, of questioning the *propriety* of any such "religious" phenomena. Why? Simply because *nobody is able* to do so on *rational* ground. *Because mankind is still without criterion in spiritual realms.*

Hence the *spiritual*—that which in more benighted ages was man's only guide and inspiration—has finally come to be society's greatest stumbling-block, and for the simple reason that the but half liberated intellect of man is still unable in abstract realms to distinguish between *rational* evidence and *sentimental* convention.

Religion is a matter of pure sentiment thus far. Man feels his essential unity with the Cosmos. He feels that this instinctive aspiration is the best and noblest in him, and consequently, recognising its legitimate pre-eminence in life, he inclines to respect anything bearing its stamp.

Naturally, this all-pervading sentiment had to seek its intellectual interpretation. And it is this interpretation—these myriads of interpretations—that among all peoples have constituted *theology.* And among most people—especially those under priestly rule—this theology has *governed,* not only in spiritual,

but also in practical life. Its commands have taken precedence over all other law—for in them have been involved eternal destinies, a fact most strikingly illustrated at this moment in France, where the clergy are endeavouring to checkmate the Government by pretending to defend the cause of God jeopardised by civil law.

If one is tempted to marvel at the peculiar mental subjection which rendered, or still renders, possible the perpetuation of these impossible theologies so much beyond their respective eras, it needs but to be remembered that for the "faithful" to *question* on like subjects was a crime—and still is, no doubt, to a certain extent. Every avenue of rational escape has thus been blocked, while centuries of such tutelage have fixed a mental state assumed to be in harmony with the sentiments. The *awe* inspired by such a spiritual straight-jacket is tremendous! It is sufficient to explain the vicious circle in which humanity has been doomed to turn: sentiment giving rise to theology, and theology interpreting sentiment, each acting and reacting on the other to make inexorable the abstract moulds in which the souls of nations are set.

And yet, who shall say that all this is

without its redeeming feature? Nothing that exists, or ever has existed in human evolution, is without its profound meaning. If the mental aristocrats of primitive ages—as well as of ages less primitive—were cunning enough to discover the inexhaustible resources of this great psychological force as a social lever for the exploitation of the masses, it is none the less a historic fact that through this same instrumentality was accomplished the immense work of social development. For it is but fair to assume that nothing short of "superhuman" authority could have effectually dealt with primitive man. The invariable form of man's first stable governments points to this, and emphasises the wisdom of the policy which among all races has made theocracy the initial system of organised collective life. The "thus saith the Lord," with its accompanying provision of future consequences in case of disobedience, has been the talismanic edict from time immemorial of both spiritual and temporal ruler; and it is easy to conceive how eminently adapted it was to certain historic periods. The social results arising therefrom have been world-wide. Civilisations have sprung out of theocracy, and to it our primitive ideas of morality and spirituality trace their source.

Much as humanity owes to this supreme factor in its evolutionary development, there is yet manifested little or no exact comprehension of its meaning and function. Consequently the "superstitions" of the pseudo-scientists are as wide of the mark as are those of the Church. While the tendency of the one is to degrade it, that of the other is to annihilate it.

What greater service, then, could be rendered humanity at this moment than to strip from religion its multiple *human* deformities, thereby restoring it to its legitimate *rôle* of Divine guide to human destinies!

CHAPTER II

THE ARGUMENT

I AM deeply sensible at the outset of the immensity as well as of the temerity of this undertaking—which is no less than an effort to change the spiritual "centre of gravity" of Christendom.

That I, individually, shall not succeed need not be told me. If it has taken over a century to instil into the collective mind a *mere perception* of the simple, self-evident principle of what is called Evolution, how much more difficult will it be to disturb the traditions of ages in a realm so subtle as that of religion! Thoroughly aware, then, of the hopelessness of such a task from an individual standpoint, I shall none the less put into it my best effort; hoping thereby to sow in the vast field of collective culture one of those infinitesimal seeds which, with myriads of others of like nature,

are destined sooner or later to bring forth the abundant harvest.

And the manner of the sowing aims to be just as simple as the subject will permit. Its appeal is directed especially to that innumerable throng of honest questioners whose *reverence* for TRUTH impels them to cling to a faith which, to their great dismay, no longer tallies with their practical lives. Having been born into it, nurtured by it, taught it as the basis of their terrestrial as well as future existence, it has become a part of their moral "bone and sinew"; they cannot shake it off. Nor, on the other hand, can they resist the diffused light of new thought, gradually permeating the minds of men—learned and unlearned alike.

From such a condition of things there necessarily results a continuous undercurrent of contradiction: ideality and reality—traditional truth and demonstrated fact arrayed in conflict; while the victims of this cruel strife are fain to exclaim with the equivocal biblical petitioner, "Lord, I believe! Help Thou my unbelief." They are almost willing to hush reason, if by so doing may be preserved *unshaken* the cherished ideal.

We criticise this unhappy attitude; but at bottom it is a stamp of spiritual rectitude. Not

he who is readiest to divest himself of worn-out spiritual clothing is most worthy to put on the new. (In the actual emergency many of this category seem glad to dispense with all clothing of the sort.) To cling to an ideal which represents our highest nature is not a discredit. Far otherwise. And there is every reason to believe that the suffering of this class, in the face of society's bewildering psychological conflicts, is profound.

It is with such in mind that this work has been undertaken. And as the simplest manner of presenting the subject would seem to be an analytic examination into the leading habits of thought and action developed by theological teachings, such is the plan here laid out. The reader is asked to pass in review, one by one, certain characteristic features of our religious world from which the spirit of analysis has hitherto been systematically excluded on the ground of sacred immunity.

But let it not be inferred from this that there is any pretence of treating the matter exhaustively. Even were that possible, the field is far too vast to permit in the present volume more than a summary glance over its surface. Should there chance to be awakened, meanwhile, sufficient interest to warrant a further

development of any point thus treated, the writer would be only too happy to be able to render any assistance therein.

The chief purpose of the moment is to *suggest* —to *force reflection* on this most misunderstood of modern questions.

We do not yet dream of the amount of "for granted" still governing us. Habits become cages whose immobilising wires paralyse the soul. Nor is it too much to say that almost the entire religious cult, or worship of society, to-day is made up of *habits*. Cosmic paths traced out in a dim past are still followed because the clerical reasons for following them are *taken for granted*. And we are powerless to do otherwise in our present lack of critical capacity in spiritual matters. Human reason, as has been said, is still impotent in spiritual realms. The laws of planetary movement are much better known. A child to-day can give the law of gravitation; but no man will be able to give you a single formula applicable to spiritual movement.

Here is the secret of the hesitancy, the unexpressed doubt, the silent misgivings, rife everywhere; as well as of the more or less disguised substitutes in the form of new interpretation or fresh inspiration offered for the

consoling of the "faithful." Meanwhile, the devoutly trained hosts stand, each self-condemned, in the abandonment of a worship in which there is no longer a possibility of hearty acquiescence. All of which painful situation is due to spiritual stagnation in theological dogma.

And yet our age is one of avowed novelty and discovery. The concrete world has become Humanity's curiosity-invoking Empire: its material eyes are wide open upon the secrets of the physical universe. Is there any reason why it should aspire to less in the empire of the abstract, which is far vaster, and more important than the first—which is, in fact, the foundation of all? It is the spiritual empire that is the *real* one: the other is but its shadow, its expression.

And yet Humanity has ever been engaged in "paying tithes in mint, anise, and cummin," to the neglect of "the weightier matters of the law;" albeit, withal, man's motive instinct at every stage in his long history, could we fathom it, would be found to be his unquenchable desire for TRUTH.

CHAPTER III

WHAT IS TRUTH?

"Truth is within ourselves;
It takes no rise
From outward things,
Whate'er you may believe.
There is an inmost centre
In us all
Where truth abides
In fulness."
—BROWNING.

"No truth so sublime but it may be trivial to-morrow in the light of new truths."—EMERSON.

No word is so pat on the lips of men as "truth."

It may be, and is, invoked on any and on all occasions; it is liable to be put forth in support of every human assumption, either practical or ideal; while in ecclesiastical realms it is held as a kind of monopoly.

Now, let us ask, What is truth?

Our lexicographers tell us that "a truth is that which is true or *certain* concerning any

matter or subject." What is to be inferred from this? That truth is in its nature *absolute* —hence *immutable?* If so, must it not also be impersonal—a matter of *discovery*—consequently subject to verification by all men alike? And should not this in turn preclude the advancement of any claim unsupported by proof?

Upon the admission of such premises it must seem evident that humanity possesses as yet very few truths. And of these few, how many are there which are not limited to the physical world? Of abstract, spiritual truths, so little knowledge have we, that, as has been shown, we are still incapable of estimating the real value of any claim put forth in that sphere, be it ever so extravagant—a fact which accounts for the absurd, illogical personal doctrines foisted upon society in every generation, and which never fail of credulous acceptance somewhere.

Would such social aberrations (with their oft disastrous individual effects) be possible did there exist any adequate criterion of truth applicable in abstract realms?

History is full of truths of this uncertain character whose influence has been more or less benign in proportion to their adapta-

tion to the age in which they originated. But that there was nothing POSITIVE in their character is shown by their *mutability*. Humanity has been obliged to make use of many such truths in its evolutionary progress. They are what may be called *relative* truths, and are calculated to render—as many of them have done—valuable service in the fulfilling of the social need. It may be necessary, even, to invest them with Divine sanction for the time being. But their usefulness ceases after a time, and then it is that their error—hence harmfulness—becomes apparent.

It is easy to perceive how a social truth considered of major importance in one age may degenerate into the stumbling-block of a more advanced one. But we cannot dispute the fact that habit and association tend to endear old truths. Our most intimate sentiments, often, are entwined about them ; and it is this very nature of the situation which renders a proper treatment of the subject difficult. The intellect is open to mathematical demonstration ; it may be convincingly appealed to ; but the sentiments *feel* only, and feelings do not reason.

Hence the difficulty of dealing with this profound subject of TRUTH in religious evolution. It is hard to separate in the minds of men the

eternal truth of the ASPIRATION of the finite soul for union with its source, from the so-called truths of the human intellect endeavouring to explain the first. The first is one of the immutable truths; the latter is, at best, but relative. The one is unchangeable, while the other is ever changing, and ever must change till humanity has arrived at a full comprehension of the scheme of the universe.

No greater sign of *vitality* in a race can be given than its capacity for change in all that appertains to *human* truths. The consequences of an inability to do so are pitifully shown among those Oriental nations whose fidelity to worn-out creeds put to shame the Christian "infidel"; while their lack of adaptation to the modern world, by reason of these very creeds, exposes them to the pitiful exploitation of their "infidel" conquerors.

A most instructive lesson on this point is the recent spectacle offered by modernised Japan. How has it come about? queries the astonished world. It has come about by the simple perception on the part of that "little" people that persistence in their time-honoured national policy meant national defeat. Happily, they possessed intellectual vitality enough to realise the fatal odds confronting them under the old

order of things ; and this suddenly transformed nation, whose imperial genealogical tree boasts an antiquity of twenty-five centuries, has suddenly sprung into the front ranks of the modern world.*

To what extent this *volte-face* penetrates the heart of the Japanese nation it would be hard to tell. "Presto-change" is not so easily accomplished in spiritual matters ; but practically, certainly, they have cast off the habiliments of an antiquated past. The significant remark of a Japanese youth, whose education had been both European and American, is not without interest in this connection. Undertaking to explain his country's new departure, he said: "We have learned that, to compete with Christian civilisation, we must adopt its principles. Our religion is far too high, now, for everyday use. We must lay it away and become modern."

Could India do as much? Could that caste-ridden, contemplative, petrified country turn from the error of its time-honoured way, we

* The beginning of this new era in Japan is said to date from 1868, when the Emperor swore the "Imperial Oath of Five Articles"—the fifth one of which is worded thus: "Knowledge shall be sought for throughout the world, so that the welfare of the Empire may be promoted." The world has been shown the marvellous result of that national revolution.

should not be offered the spectacle of three hundred millions of people at the mercy of a merciless Christian nation, "taxed into periodic famine and misgoverned into perennial epidemic—at an annual death-rate of over a million."

India offers a sample of those truths which curse a stagnant spirituality. Such are the lamentable conditions of mummified souls, where the living sap of COSMIC aspiration has utterly dried up from lack of sufficient intellectual force to throw off the empty forms of a dead theology.

The modern branches of the Aryan race, happily, are not among those to suffer this sort of stagnation. Their mental activity is too great ever to permit a spiritual rigidity approaching the examples cited. Therefore the groaning and travailing now going on in our religious world: the orthodox believer, distracted by the constantly widening breach between Divine truths of two thousand years ago, and modern scientific, or TRUTH, discovery; intellect and sentiment at war; and the real secret of the trouble apparently not guessed at.

Meanwhile, criticisms and lamentations (all insistent on antipodal points of view) mingle in a generally demoralising Babel.

Tolstoy, a fair representative of the present mental status on such subjects, exclaims, on one side, that "the Christian world has completely lost religion." The would-be scientist, on the other side, claims that it does not need any religion. Both sides unwittingly display how little either side really understands of this momentous modern problem.

And yet the whole difficulty of the situation may be summed up in two words—FALSE PREMISES. Necessarily, the character of a judgment must rest upon its point of view. Society can never arrive at a correct judgment on these matters until it has taken a fresh and more scientific point of view. It is an idea, an idea alone, which sets up this present man of straw —this bugbear of the honest soul. Remove that and the perplexities of the problem dissolve away. Once penetrate mankind with the fact that the most that can be claimed for theological truths is that they may be temporarily good, and that it is not only a mistake, but a great wrong to attribute divinity to anything not so proven by its immutability, and we shall have disposed of the greatest difficulty in the way of a proper recognition of the value of *conventional* truths.

The word "truth," in fact, is handled far too

lightly everywhere—even in our social and political relations ; how much more to be regretted in a sphere as intangible as that of the spiritual realm—a pure abstraction, where without the control of the intellect sentiment may run wild.

CHAPTER IV

AUTHORITY

"*Je crois parce que les grands savants, les esprits qui ont le plus honoré l'humanité avaient la foi.*"—LE PÈRE ALBERT.*

"*Authority perpetuates the individual who, as an individual, should pass away, and is, in the main, an obstacle to the advancement of humanity.*"—GOETHE.

WHICH of these two opposing attitudes concerning authority appeals to the common sense of the reader?

True, the occasion which called out the declaration of "Father Albert" was a peculiarly turbulent one, caused by the impassioning question of the separation of Church and State then agitating the French nation. Only the presence of Monsieur Lepine, the Paris

* "I believe because the great savants, the minds who have been the greatest credit to humanity, believe."

préfet de police, rendered possible any kind of order during church service that day. However, the significant words of Father Albert, "trembling" though they were, are cited here because of their actuality, presenting as they do but too faithfully the ordinary basis of ecclesiastical "belief"—with the Romanists, at least, who, having but slight direct acquaintance with the Bible, are unable to fall back on the authority of the "inspired" Word.

Now, let us ask, what is the value of what is called "authority"? What is its *rôle* either in the intellectual or moral world?

Briefly stated, it is a *reliable* sanction for conduct or opinion; is it not? How, then, can it be seriously claimed that the simple *opinion* of an individual, however important in public esteem, is worthy to be classed as *authority?* Victor Hugo is said to have exclaimed on his death-bed, "I believe in God!" Well! What then? Victor Hugo's simple belief, living or dying, *proves* nothing—can effect nothing in the economy of the universe. The eminence of the man, to be sure, would have its wide influence, and it might aid in confirming an opinion already tending that way; but surely no such statement could carry with it solid conviction in the mind of another—that

is, in a mind capable of rational conviction on any subject.

This fact will, I think, not be disputed. And yet nothing is more general in the support of any position or claim than the citing of individual authority. How many injustices and tyrannies have been sanctioned on such flimsy basis! We have authority in law, authority in religion, authority in science—the world is full of authority, much of which but serves to perpetuate error. Authority—inflexible, trammelling, often *barbarous* authority, confronts us on every side, from the *ipse dixit* of the Pope at Rome to the modern surgical clinic, where human flesh is not infrequently desecrated at the fiat of authority. Yet, after all, when these many authoritative assumptions are simmered down to their quintessent value, there remains what? Not infrequently but little more than arbitrary personal opinions sustained by prejudice, self-interest, or, it may be, vanity.

"What," I hear, "would you banish authority? What would society do without authority, however imperfect?"

We are not undertaking now to deal with the political or social world in the sense of government control. The evils under discus-

sion are those arising chiefly from the currency gained, and the power exercised by mere individual utterances to which are attributed undue weight, and which are consequently conducive to error. Opinion or belief is valuable to mankind generally only so far as it is supported by *proof*. When in the scientific world discovery is made and proclaimed, the collective judgment is suspended until such claim has passed through the crucible of proof, whereupon the "authority" thus established *ceases to be individual and becomes universal*. A Kepler, a Newton, a Galileo, a Harvey, lives in the memory of mankind by virtue of the importance of the discovery which each has been able to verify; and in which the personality of each—powerless either to add to or detract from established facts—is merged. It is not the *name* of Kepler which can support an argument on certain planetary movements, but the *verified* laws formulated by him.

Such are the uncompromising conditions which govern all claims in the world of physical science. And how could it be otherwise in view of the barren hypotheses whose short-lived histories are among the most instructive footprints of progress? What an interesting chapter could be made of these far-

fetched guesses of mankind, many of them still lingering—a kind of poetic fringe on the borders of the promised scientific land.

And likewise is it in the abstract realm—still more replete with guesses—poetic, many of them, but rarely worthy to pin a "faith" to; and it is certainly safe to say that not one of such individual opinions may yet be properly raised to the dignity of "AUTHORITY." The more intimately they touch us, the more do they disclose their *very* hypothetical character.

Mankind should be reserved on questions of authority in all realms—especially in the abstract, where human control is still so difficult, and where the yearnings of the undeveloped soul are so apt to lead one astray.

CHAPTER V

WHAT IS RELIGION?

> "*Epicurus was the first who saw there were gods from the impression which Nature herself makes on the minds of men.*"—VELLEIUS.
>
> "*Surely man will never rest till he has discovered the purpose that runs through the religions of mankind, and until he has constructed the true* Civitas Dei *on foundations as wide as the ends of the world.*"—MAX MÜLLER.

THE reader has doubtless remarked the distinction already made between religion and theology.

There is, there can be, but *one* religion, whereas of theologies there are many. Nevertheless it has been customary to class under the head of "religion" everything touching the subject in any way. We speak of "a man's religion," "a people's religion," "a nation's

religion," "the true religion," when, in point of fact, the thing alluded to may be without an atom of religion in it. Men have so long accustomed themselves to talk of religion as if it were a *state* to be entered into or abandoned at will, and to use the word as a kind of class, race, or even political badge, that it has come to be considered as scarcely more than a distinguishing social or political quality. A change of religion is talked of, and practised almost as lightly as a change of garment: questions of state may be said to require it, or a matrimonial policy to dictate it.

Naturally, this indiscriminate mixture of things spiritual and temporal would not be surprising in an age dominated by the Church: but that it should continue to prevail in an age of so much enlightenment goes to show how the deadly and deadening tentacles of habit can close around the intellect; how words can come to be as "tinkling bells" in the conservative ear of a formal world.

Now what is religion?

The simplest effort at analysis makes evident that what we are pleased to call "religion" is composed of three distinct factors. First, we have its basis, the religious sentiment—the

Divine element in man. Second, the theology, or intellectual explanation of this sentiment. Third, the worship, or practical expression of the same. The first, consequently, must be *innate,* since it is born in man and may be called a spontaneous uplifting of the human soul. It is the unquenchable beacon of man's spiritual nature—the compass of his moral development; or, in scientific parlance, it is the gravitation of the finite to the Infinite—of the part to the whole.

This first, then, is universal and absolute, dependent neither upon individuality nor upon nationality—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Theology, on the other hand, being but a finite effort to explain the spontaneous intuition, is of a totally different character. Its sole function is to furnish a theory of this God which the intuitions feel—a science of God, in fine, as the word implies: *theo,* "God," and *ology,* "science." Still, whatever its pretensions as a *theory* may be, no theology, in the strict sense of the word, can yet claim to be a science. Science is *knowledge,* and thus far we *know absolutely nothing of the abstract side of what is called God.* We see Him manifested in material Nature—the very breath

of our physical body is a perpetual testimony to His existence, if you will; but as regards the scheme of the universe and the personality of its Creator, no human being can truthfully claim to know anything. Whence it must naturally follow that these theologies, which in the world's history have been legion (all generally mutually and bitterly antagonistic), are full of the limitations and errors which characterise the productions of man when (unguided by universal law) he attempts to establish a theory of the Cosmos.

To be convinced on this point, one need but to review the career of the Church in any civilised age or country. What, in the list of social iniquities which blacken the pages of history, may not be set down to the account of some one of these theologies sanctimoniously called religion!

In the face of such history there can surely be no disputing the very human origin of the world's theologies. And this point conceded, who can estimate the harm done by their continued identification in the minds of the people with that Divine sentiment which they have undertaken to interpret? Were anything more needed to explain the moral anomalies of modern society? Is it not

becoming daily more and more manifest that modern civilisation has outgrown its theology? Popular enlightenment has become too strong for it; and the consequent reaction, which is tending to a wholesale condemnation of Humanity's most sacred institutions, is making a new and defiant moral tone encouraged among all classes.

Now, if we would stay this irreligious tendency, we must dissociate in the minds of the new generation these hitherto allied, but essentially distinct, elements, creed and religion—the one, in most cases, being a practical denial of the other, which stands, or ought to stand, for the noblest, highest aspirations of mankind.

Such dissociation would at once change the aspect of the religious problem—growing daily more complicated in the light of increased knowledge and an ever-widening range of logical thought. Society must either be forced to close its eyes to the religious incongruities confronting it, in the shape of demonstrated error, professional inconsistencies, meaningless forms and ceremonies, or frankly accept the situation. For we have reached a point in evolutionary growth where there is no alternative if we would preserve the modern world from general spiritual bankruptcy.

This faith called "Christianity" has been so trailed in the dust of superstition, so made to subserve hypocrisy, worldly ambition, self-aggrandisement, political intrigue—even vice—that it is no longer recognisable as the simple declaration of principles of an honest, God-fearing people. Practical religion may be said to have well-nigh vanished from society, while the name of religion has become such a reproach among men that the rising generation boasts of freedom from its trammels.

Alas for the spiritual blindness which renders such things possible! The little finite integer known as a personality would scarcely be worth talking about were it limited to a purely individual existence. The beasts of the field have as much. The crowning glory of man is his power to conceive of a Cosmic origin, and by such conception to lift the individual to a union with *and recognised part of the Great Whole.* It is the soul's aspiration for this union with the Infinite which makes man worthy his place in creation.

This it is which constitutes his *true religion.*

CHAPTER VI

COMPARATIVE RELIGION

> "*The doctrine of our master consists in integrity of heart. The broad-minded see the truth in different religions; the narrow-minded see only differences.*"
> —CONFUCIUS.

> "*Dante is the spokesman of the middle ages; the thought they lived by stands here in everlasting music.*"—CARLYLE.

A GREATER familiarity with the Bibles of the "heathen" might surprise the Christian who has never known "religion" in any creed but his own.

It is with no pretence to a worthy handling of the subject that I have given to this chapter its heading. Such an undertaking—to say nothing of the erudition thereby inferred—would require volumes. But I cannot refrain from touching, at least, upon this most interesting study known as "comparative religion,"

than which there is none more edifying in historic research.

In comparative religion, as in comparative language (of like source, the spontaneous intuitions of mankind), is revealed more than in any other way the intimate processes of humanity's spiritual unfolding. Whether the characters expressing the successive phases of this unfolding be Sanscrit, Arabic, Hieroglyphic, or Cuneiform, all are susceptible of like interpretation—all point to the same meaning. And the peculiar interest awakened by this study is its disclosure of the kindred spirit pervading all religions. It matters not the land or the age in which a religious leader may have been born, the wellspring of his inspiration is in every case that same cosmic yearning for union with the Great Unknown which is the soul's religion.

Naturally, the various creations evolved from this cosmic aspiration are cast in different and distinct moulds—each according to race psychology and the brain organisation of the *finite creator,* who has stamped it with his individual personality; for the prophet, however inspired, cannot transcend the scope of his intellectual vision, bounded necessarily by the limitations of his age and *milieu*. The more

wonderful, consequently, the religious literature which has come down to us from past "benighted" ages. How beautifully are expressed, and with what dignity, many of those primitive conceptions of the moral order of the universe! The simple declaration of Confucius at the head of this chapter is worthy of a Christ; and the following, from the same great Chinese philosopher, would not disgrace a modern savant: "What Heaven has conferred is called Nature; an accordance with this nature is called the path of duty; the regulation of this path of duty is called instruction." Naïvely expressed, but what a volume of modern perception contained therein! The "heathen" Hindu, to whom we send Christian missionaries and our Christianising bayonets, gives expression to a sentiment very like that of Confucius when he says: "The narrow-minded ask, Is this man a stranger or is he of our tribe? But to those in whom love dwelleth the whole world is but one family." "God hath made of one blood all the nations of men!" exclaimed St. Paul at Athens. The biblical admonition, "Do ye good for evil," is rendered thus by Buddha: "If a man foolishly does me wrong, I will return him the protection of my ungrudging love. The more

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evil comes from him, the more good shall come from me." And in like spirit the Zoroastrian exclaims: "Always meet petulance with gentleness and perverseness with kindness. Reply to thine enemy with gentleness."

The following from the Zend-Avesta—the Parsee Scriptures—might easily be taken from the Bible of the Christian:

"That I will ask Thee tell me it aright, Thou living God! Who was in the beginning the Father and Creator of truth? Who made the stars? Who caused the moon to increase and wane, if not Thou? . . . That I will ask Thee, tell me it aright, Thou living God! Who is holding the earth and skies above it? Who made the water and the trees of the fields? Who is in the winds and storms that they so quickly run? Who is the Creator of the good-minded beings, Thou Wise?"

The reading of these edifying texts is apt to awaken in the unfamiliar reader a sentiment of incredulity. Their correspondence to ideas and aspirations which the Christian has been wont to look upon as exclusive is so striking as to seem to him incredible. Nor is this testimony to the UNITY of the COLLECTIVE SOUL—that is to say, the ONENESS of the great intuitions of humanity in all ages and among all conditions—readily admitted by the sectarian devotee.

Suppose, now, beside these noble heathen sentiments we were to set the biblical injunction of the Jewish moralist, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," what might be the logical inference as to relative superiority among contrasted religions? And yet it cannot be denied that in the Christian world such has generally been the principle of practical social and political policy, a principle but too universally shared by mankind in every clime; for, in spite of the Chinese maxim, "A wise man avenges injuries by benefits," the ordinary Celestial is, in such matters, no better, probably, than the Christian.

All of which is of no special importance; it could not be otherwise under actual conditions, and simply goes to show how little *abstract conceptions* really touch a people whose practical life and education are not in harmony with their conventional precepts. It shows, moreover, the universal dead-level regarding those fundamental qualities which characterise the unregenerate human—be he Jew or Gentile, Brahman or Parsee.

If the sublime precepts and poetic aspirations of the Rig-Vedas and the Zend-Avesta are so far above the practical lives of those races who produced them, marvel not, dear reader,

when like incongruities are exhibited close at home.

Precept and practice are everywhere at war, especially in Christendom. But, happily, there is one *saving* distinction between the Christian and the heathen world, and that is capacity for GROWTH. The whole secret is there.

The religious conceptions of those early Oriental prophets, however worthy, were lacking in the elements of growth, and they fell upon a primitive people like a spiritual cowl, petrifying them in an arrested development. Successive ages have rolled on, leaving the Hindu and the Parsee masses in a dead psychological past, with spiritual beliefs utterly inapplicable to the requirements of modern life; with "sacred" rites and ceremonies which have become as "sounding brass," monotonous formulæ out of which long since departed all the juices of a palpitating humanity—the original ideas of their founders lost, even, in the accumulated dust of centuries of degenerating practices.

The *élite* among these people have preserved the early Brahminical and Buddhist conceptions with admirable fidelity to their purity and elevation of thought; but still, they constitute an *élite*—an intellectual aristocracy—

between whom and the people there is little in common. Moreover, the Indian by his very *subjective* character tends to divorce himself from practical life. Consequently, his religion is one unbefitting the spirit of progress.

Had we not irrefutable proof of relationship, it would be difficult to believe that the dreaming, passive Indian, whose religious motto is "gentleness," could be a branch of the Aryan race, whose European posterity are the active, aggressive artisans of modern civilisation. There is a mystery about this wide distinction which our ethnologists and philologists have not succeeded in quite dispelling. Elisee Reclus would explain it all by geographic and topographic conditions. They hardly seem sufficient.

Passing over to Arabia, the birthplace of the youngest of the historic religions, we find analogous social conditions, albeit Mohammedism itself grew out of a protest—a revolt of the great "camel-driver" against the abuses of God's chosen people. The Koran is strewn with lofty intuitions and intellectual conceptions—many of them not unworthy of our most advanced modern teachers. Take as an example the following:

"Teach science: for to teach science is to

glorify God. Scientific discussion is a sacred discussion. Through science we distinguish justice from injustice: it is a confidant in the desert and a companion in solitude; a faithful guide both in fortune and misfortune. . . . It is the heart's remedy for the death of ignorance. It is the flambeau of the Spirit in the night of injustice."

At one time, we know, the Arabs were a most learned people. They brought the light of their science into far less advanced Europe, and came very near giving to European civilisation its definite direction. Their idea of God, as defined by the Mohammedan savant Al-Gazzali, is superior in a sense to the Christian idea. He says: "A knowledge of God cannot be obtained by means of the knowledge a man has of himself, or of his own soul. The attributes of God cannot be determined from the attributes of man: His sovereignty and government can neither be compared nor measured."

In beauty of architectural achievement the Arabs have never been surpassed; and the monuments they left behind them, after six to seven hundred years of Spanish dominion, are still the admiration of the modern architectural amateur.

And yet, notwithstanding all its brilliant past,

Mohammedism to-day offers the spectacle of that same stultifying influence upon the practical life of its devotees which is a reproach to the Oriental. How shall this be accounted for except by that inflexible rigidity which has crept upon each one of these races through spiritual teachings—closing them to progressive social growth as effectually as if they were already sealed up in the tomb.

During the first century of Mohammedism all was intellectual activity. Mohammedan courts were centres of learning: the sciences, especially mathematics and astronomy, were assiduously cultivated, and philosophers of every theological shade were welcome if they but added to the general fund of learning. Naturally, at that time the Caliphs were savants —chosen from the ranks of the intellectually *élite*. Was it not Al-Raschid who commanded that every new mosque built should associate with it a school?

Such a past precludes the excuse of race. It cannot be advanced in the present case, as is often done in that of the Asiatics, that an inherent, inferior mentality explains present conditions. It does not; although no one coming in contact with the Arab of to-day can fail to recognise his actual state, which

it is impossible to attribute to other than *degeneracy*. These people have descended in the social scale by virtue of centuries of *stultifying "belief."*

It would be too much to undertake here to analyse the various distinct features which have accomplished the fatal result; but every one of these features is susceptible of the clearest demonstration.*

Our sole purpose at present is to draw attention to the all-determining *rôle* of BELIEF among a people. The observing Christian, troubled by the glaring infidelities to his own faith, so widely deplored, and noting down, to the heathen's credit, his unswerving fidelity to *his* God, is apt to make self-reproachful comparison. Weighed in the conventional spiritual balance, the Christian must unquestionably be judged wanting; his observances of established "rites and ceremonies" are, certainly, unworthy to be ranked with those of the heathen.

Take, for instance, the observance of the Mussulman's "Ramadan," which corresponds to the Christian's Lental season. In no Moslem

* It cannot be denied that topographical conditions in this case have had their effect in encouraging the Arab in his nomadic existence. Still, other nationalities are subject to like conditions on the same ground with results totally different.

publication could be found reference to this season such as is offered in the following paragraph from an American daily—an avowed resting-up from social excesses:

"PREPARING FOR EASTER.

"With the beginning of February it is but natural to expect a great change in the fashion world, for the Lenten season will be the busiest of the entire year with the dress-loving women who are eager to possess fine raiment for Easter. Usually the wearing of spring fabrics at Easter heralded the arrival of spring, and women realised they could don thinner raiment and wear their flowered hats. However, since there is no cessation in the wearing of flowered fabrics and jaunty little straw hats, since they are worn almost the entire year, then must Easter be, to dress-loving women at least, an occasion for having something decidedly new and beautiful in which to garb themselves. This is not written in a sense to appear sacrilegious, because we know that many of the best Cnurch workers are just as eager for this change of dress as those who are wholly interested in it. It is merely a time set apart by old-time custom, and doubtless will remain so for all time.

> "During the quiet Lenten weeks, when women do little or no entertaining, the period is devoted to quiet hours in which they can remodel or fashion new garments. It gives sufficient time to create clever ideas, make satisfactory selections, and fashion the garments in the most becoming and artistic styles. Little wonder, then, that we see the most beautiful creations imaginable at this time."

The womanly writer of this worldly sentiment would doubtless resent an insinuation of irreligion on her part. She has been too long accustomed to this modern kind of religion. But the Mussulman would as soon think of cheating his neighbour as of cheating his God. Every precept contained in the Koran regarding the Moslem's Lent is as scrupulously observed to-day—more so, perhaps—as it was thirteen hundred years ago. His is not the dilettantism of the Christian—cutting out superfluities, following a diet designed to repair the ravages of sensual indulgence, or, worse still, paying Heaven's representatives in earthly coin for the *privilege* of continuing such indulgence. The heathen's abstinence is absolute—from daylight to dark. The Koran says the fast shall begin "as soon as it is possible to

distinguish between a black thread and a white thread," and shall end at the close of day, when it is no longer possible to so distinguish.

It is pitiable, the sight presented by these victims of conscience, lying about the streets limp and faint—neither food nor drink being permitted to pass their lips during the prescribed hours. True, they usually spend the succeeding nights in sensual compensation; but the Koran says nothing about that, and the Mohammedan is "faithful to his God."

Now, what are the inferences to be drawn from these opposing spiritual attitudes—the one Christian, the other heathen? What moral do they offer? Are we, indeed, to regard it as a reproach that the so-called inferior races are the more honest observers of their respective faiths?

Many incline to that view, as they deplore the actual spiritual "lukewarmness" of the Christian world.

Apparently, it has not yet occurred to such that this very shortcoming may be the saving feature of the race. Ideas, it is true, constitute society's moral palladium; and for this reason, above all others, are to be honoured and cherished. But, as has been already remarked, like the mind which conceives them, ideas are

subjects of growth. Those of one age cannot conveniently remain as those of another where all the social conditions to which they gave rise are outgrown. Neither the Buddhist nor the Mohammedan has ever suspected this. No doubts regarding the accepted scheme of the universe disturbs the even tenor of their spiritual way. Their faiths are fixed and final —"of Divine origin," and cannot change. Hence they are not troubled with spiritual unrest. Where they were centuries ago, there they are to-day; and this unquestioning fidelity, counted as a *virtue* among the Asiatics and other races, is the most conspicuous token of their moral weakness and intellectual limitation.

To the reflecting Christian such a spectacle ought not to be without suggestion. In Christendom, however, many contending forces have contributed toward the advancement of spiritual growth. The real "modern" cannot stand still either morally or physically: to the Occidental-Aryan mental activity is second nature, albeit, in certain realms, this disposition to ideal immobility has had its season of undisputed sway.

Such periods, it must be believed, are inevitable among all nations, and have unques-

tionably their great purpose in the work of civilisation. The function of the historian is not only to catalogue them, but to try to penetrate to their evolutionary significance.

CHAPTER VII

THE CHURCH

> "*The childhood of the European nations was passed under the tutelage of the Church.*"—MACAULAY.
>
> "*But now are we delivered from the law [Church], that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.*"—ROMANS vii. 6.

THE word "church," at one time of great authoritative significance in Christendom, has gradually broadened its meaning, until in Protestant countries it has come to designate denominational groups of every variety of sect. In England, however, "the Church" is still that "ritualistic" form of worship which grew out of Henry VIII.'s quarrel with Pope Leo X. for refusing to sanction his marital caprices.

On the Continent, among all Latin peoples, "the Church" still signifies exclusively that

vast organisation which acknowledges but a single head: the incumbent of the Vatican. Nevertheless, there has always existed a sort of rival to this Roman head in the form of what is now called the "Greek Church:" a last gorgeous remnant of the early splendours of Constantinople, and still considered by its adherents as the only *truly* Orthodox Church. When the Emperor Constantine (for reasons of political interest) established Christianity as his official religion, making of that beautiful spot to which he gave his name its authoritative centre, those Eastern countries which had embraced the new faith were brought into the Eastern Church, and they still bear its distinctive mark. The Armenians, for instance, whose present sufferings from Turkish persecution are a constant cause of international protest, were among such early converts.

What the "Eastern" Church was essentially in those early days, it has continued to be, with but little perceptible change, up to the present. For, when the growing divergence of ideas and policy between the Eastern and Western Churches had finally culminated, as it did in the eleventh century (1054), at the very moment of complete papal ascendancy, the advantage was on the side of Rome. It was

the Western world that by that time had taken possession of the great historic stage, and Rome thereafter became the centre of ecclesiastical action.

Thus relegated to gradual nonentity, the Eastern Church settled down into its primitive tenets, customs, and ceremonies, which, beside those of modernised Rome, now seem very antiquated.

Among those countries still holding to the primitive Church tenets, Russia is the most important; and the keynote to her actual savage, benighted, belated, social state is given in her antiquated theology. The natural result of such side-tracking, as it were, of a branch of a living organism, withdrawing it from the main, progressive stream, has been a general petrifaction in all pertaining to spiritual life among these people. Little by little the "letter" has come to stand for everything, till the Russian Church has finally become *purely formal*. It is to-day the most sumptuous, curious, instructive form of Christian worship that exists. The symbolising of the Trinity is here insisted upon, it seems, in every feature of church ceremony. According to an Archbishop of Novgorod, in alluding to the fact, "whoever repeats the word Allelujah but twice

instead of three times in the liturgy sings to his own damnation." Even to the manner of making the Greek cross specific instructions are given by the priests, who are uncompromising in their requirements that the faithful shall make it with three fingers, and a body of Dissenters called Raskolniks,* who have always chosen to make it with two fingers, were once the cause of a bloody war growing out of this fact.

Now, we know that the head of this sumptuous, material, soulless Church is not a pope, a "spiritual" ruler, consecrated to that purpose, but a Czar, a worldly autocrat, the legitimate successor of Constantinople's Pope. He may be a despot, yet his will is "*God's will.*" As the head of the Church he represents the nation's spirituality, and yet he may in reality be the most licentious and irreligious of men.

When we contemplate the dreadful spectacle offered in Russia to-day, the inhuman savagery which has aroused the protests of modern Christendom, it is easy to trace therein the

* The Raskolniks are a sect of old-style believers still fairly well represented in Russia. When in 1654 the patriarch Nikou undertook a revision of the MS. of Holy Writ, a certain number of the faithful pronounced themselves in favour of the primitive version, and separated from the Orthodox Church in consequence. These are the Raskolniks.

stultifying, material Church policy of centuries. And we behold therein a conspicuous case where the name stands for the thing—where, in the place of religion, stands an antiquated creed without a particle of spirituality in it, administered, moreover, by men as heartless as they are soulless.

Passing back to Rome, we find in this Western branch of the Christian Church many modifications consequent upon her contact with the living stream of progress. Then, too, temporal vicissitudes, unknown to autocratic Russia, have humbled her. Her despotic political sway has been cut into by powerful territorial competitors, while the mellowing atmosphere of the scientific world has penetrated to her intimate recesses. Not daring any longer to deal blows, she cunningly *schemes* for the furtherance of her policy—seeming often to approve what she looks upon with secret condemnation. We all know the conservative history of this Church: how she has opposed every step in scientific advance, martyrising its apostles, burning them at the stake, burning their books, hurling at them dire anathema—supposed to seal their fate in the "unquenchable fires of hell," or forcing that humiliating recantation which

has rendered so famous Galileo's "*e pur se muove.*"

Ever on the alert to suppress that intellectual light which she instinctively recognises as her most potent enemy, the Church, since her accession to temporal power, has invariably been on the side of conservatism. Or, when new views have become insuppressible, she has hastened to palliate her short-sightedness by making a virtue of necessity. And how well she can assume the air of "injured innocence" when overcome by defeat! Witness the pitiable, sickening demonstration of the Catholic Church in America concerning recent events in France. In a country founded upon *liberty of conscience*, this relic of old-world tyranny essays to awaken sympathetic support of its impossible pretensions—priests attempting to recount history, and distorting facts in their effort to create "a cause."

Yes, the Revolution *did* "confiscate" those vast domains wherein centred the accumulated, ill-gotten wealth of centuries, and it did God—*i.e.*, humanity—service in so doing. It is also a historic fact (so great was the revulsion of an enraged nation against this insatiable octopus) that had it not been for the *power* still exercised by the Church in spite of her

notorious abuses, that Revolution would have been the final finishing of her reign in France.

But nations, like individuals, are creatures of habit. Convictions that have sunk to the marrow of a people cannot be uprooted in a single revolution. Napoleon felt this: he realised that he must compromise matters with this powerful enemy, for personal success was involved therein. Hence the "Concordat" by which he dictated terms and made conditions which he thought tenable and compatible with the interests of state.

But France has grown in a century. The iron grasp of superstition has been forced to relax in the melting light of education, and old habits of thought are being gradually cast aside. As is advanced reproachfully by these plausible Church apologists, the seed of doubt sown in the eighteenth century has taken deep root among those quick-witted people—too deep, in fact, ever to be uprooted by a senile theology.

Every effort of modern France to place her institutions of state on a common-sense, rational basis is but the expression of a modern conviction representing a high moral purpose.

Apropos of the actual situation in France, this "destruction of religion"—against which

Rome is crying so loudly—has it been remarked that no other sectarian voice mingles in the complaint? Neither Protestant nor Jew sustains these charges against the Government. Why? Simply because they have nothing to complain of. Their theological positions are not assailed, inasmuch as their "religious" ambitions are bounded by their respective religious duties. To these "religious liberty" in France offers as much scope as it does in America. But for "the Church," to whom religious liberty means *dominion*, the situation is indeed serious. It is the "flesh-pots of Egypt" that underlie Rome's protest; the Republic has touched her most sensitive point. And since, like Samson, she has been shorn of the locks wherein lay her strength, fain would she likewise resemble him in the destruction of the temple (of state).

The myriad Protestant sects which have grown out of the Reformation—the advent of "free thought" in religious matters—are but so much testimony to the very human character of all "religious" manifestation thus far.

Each distinct existing sect makes the same claim to *biblical foundation*, and every religious organisation in Christendom is but an expression of some peculiar, one-sided inter-

pretation of the doctrines enunciated in this "Holy Book." Furthermore, every individual who aspires to establish a religion has made for himself or herself the biblical interpretation upon which the new idea was to rest. To this point it is interesting to call especial attention, for it is worthy to note that, whatever may be the ultimate development or transformation of a given religious organisation, its original conception is *invariably* the product of a *single* brain, the brain of a strong personality—a psychological dominator, able to impress and control contemporary minds.

The duration of such a "religion"—or schism—(always indicative of spiritual unrest and uncertainty in the age producing it) depends on the nature of its underlying principle. The underlying principle of many being but mercenary, selfish, has led to their more or less rapid and inglorious demise. Some there are, however, in every age whose influence is beneficent. All appeals to man's higher nature are beneficent. The specific claims of such appeals may be erroneous from a superior standpoint, but they answer a purpose, a social need, even though the name of "science" be involved wherein there *is no science*.

It would seem to be in the scheme of Nature

to permit these abstract scaffoldings about the magnificent spiritual edifice in process of building. The little finite builder is not yet conscious of his work; he has not seen the great Architect's plan, and he is apt to confound temporary help with the lasting structure. But this is no subject of reproach: he has done what he could, and most often conscientiously.

The religious life of man is still a thing apart, relegated to particular "sanctuaries," expressed in particular rites and ceremonies. The day is coming when the whole life of man will be religious, and the whole world one vast temple. This can come to pass only when the entire system of man's moral life is based upon the SPIRITUAL LAWS of the universe, long before which time "the Church" will have passed away.

CHAPTER VIII

IMMORTALITY

"*Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting,*
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Has had elsewhere its setting
And cometh from afar."
—WORDSWORTH.

"*Attractions are proportional to destinies.*"—FOURIER.

HERE are the utterances of two gifted men—one poetic, the other mathematic—both suggestive and beautiful, and both referring to immortality. No idea in human experience has been so all-absorbing as this one; none has exerted so great, so controlling, an influence. It has been the *substratum* of every religious manifestation, and among all peoples the sum of man's spiritual aspiration.

Upon what ground? What is our assurance that this unquenchable mortal desire comes within the scheme of Nature?

"Biblical authority!" it may be answered. Yes, all Bibles discourse of a heaven of some kind. But biblical authority is sometimes questioned. If it can be doubted on any point, may it not be open to question on all? That, then, can scarcely be accepted as *conclusive*.

"Take the very fact you admit," is insisted —"the universality of the desire: that ought to be conclusive." And that, indeed, must be said to be the strongest argument we possess in its favour. If it be true that "attractions are proportional to destinies"—of which it is easy to be persuaded if we observe its all-pervading, determining influence in Nature's economy—then the fact of immortality may be said to be established: albeit, attractions in some cases, like the needle in the disordered compass, point the wrong way. Still, despite the myriad distorting, attraction-thwarting abnormalities in our actual social organisation, this undying, insuppressible longing for the "Beyond" must have a meaning.

It may not—it cannot—be just what we think *individually*, for millions have made to themselves individual pictures of Paradise. But who shall dare to deny that there is some Cosmic correspondence to an intuition capable of awakening such a universal pean?

What can it be? What would we not give to be able to lift the veil! to catch one comprehending glimpse of that future whose "transcendent glory" humanity has ever sung, and to whose portals so many millions have pressed their eager way in the hope of finding a compensation for this "veil of tears"—this season of probation designed to "try men's souls."

But suppose we stop just at this point for a moment's reflection. Were this "veil of tears" suddenly transformed—should it come to pass that what has so long been looked upon as a season of "probation," with no better purpose than to try men's souls, was really a season of *privilege,* immeasurable possibilities, and with a worthy consummation of destiny at the end—would we be so eager to exchange our familiar life on earth for an unknown heaven?

"Ah!" I hear; "you suggest a picture that is unrealisable, and talk as if a choice on our part were possible."

That is not my meaning. Besides, we know not yet what are to be life's possibilities on this globe. Such knowledge is among the mysteries to be revealed to a bigger race of men and women. Still, even under actual conditions there are significant phenomena which

to those able to interpret them suggest a terrestrial future immeasurably superior to anything yet known.

At any rate, whatever that problematic destiny may be, must it not be in conformity with Cosmic design—hence good? There is little cause to doubt that what is *worthy* of eternity will achieve it if there is intelligence in the universe—not to speak of sentiment. My meaning is, that a far worthier attitude for Humanity regarding future destiny would be to lift itself out of the small, individual preoccupation about that personal "salvation" which has thus far been the great absorbing consideration.

Why this individual eagerness to be "saved"? Saved from what?

Humanity conducts itself, regarding its spiritual future, very much as a child in the dark. Its one overwhelming sentiment in confronting the Unknown is *fear*. FEAR! That cruel instrument of the designing, that soul-disease of the ignorant! What fatal, benighting, belittling mental conditions has it not brought about! By its instrumentality a senile Pope may sit in purple and fine linen at the Vatican—rolling up his "Peter's pence" by the hundreds of thousands, while his adoring,

prostrate "children" in many parts of the world want for bread. By its instrumentality a poor widow may be induced with her last farthing to pray her husband's soul out of Purgatory, or, in like sentiment, to mount the funeral pyre and burn beside his dead body. Think of the gold exchanged for prayer—and that in the name of One who offered the Kingdom of Heaven "without money and without price." Think, as well, of the fortunes that have been sacrificed to that insatiable superstition. Anne of Austria, the mother of Louis XIV., left in her will provision for *ten thousand Masses* for the repose of her soul. Think you that soul's future (determined unquestionably with her last breath) was materially or spiritually affected thereby? Mark the ridiculous inconsistency of the Church: That which during the terrestrial career is admitted to be a kind of vague, intangible essence, a spirit, becomes upon death suddenly endowed with the substantiality of sentient being in order to properly fill the purgatorial programme and "save" itself at the cost of a few pieces of sordid metal. If anything in heathen lands can surpass this in theological ingenuity, it would be interesting to know it.

Such are the lamentable conditions created by fear—such is the humiliating attitude imposed upon these fear-ridden mortals, bent on "saving a soul" scarcely fit to fling to a beggar, much less to inflict upon a God.

Surely the day cannot be far off when man shall be capable of attributing to the Cosmos a certain degree of intelligence. If, as is often repeated, "God's ways are not man's ways," and we are unable yet to comprehend Him, can we not at least abstain from reducing Him to a small edition of ourselves?

On his country's battlefield a soldier worthy the name would scorn to consider his own personal safety of supreme importance; but on life's battlefield cowardly ideals make it the overshadowing thought. In everything appertaining to practical life men encourage bravery, "manliness," but just as soon as one entertains the thought of heaven he is expected to become a coward—grovelling around on his knees and confessing himself a "miserable sinner" in whom there is no good. (Suppose some one, taking him at his word, should venture to remind him of the fact!) No human aspirant to creative work but would resent the criticism implied in man's condemnation of *his* Creator's work. If there is "no good" in us, why—in

the name of God—are we here? Do we require any better evidence of humanity's actual intellectual status than this assumption that it is doing God service (worshipping Him) to go about pleading and begging for a soul's salvation?—a veritable insult to any worthy idea of a Creator of dignity, sentiment, and intellect. How clearly do these forms of worship reveal the source of their origin! The idea of spiritual dignity had not dawned on the race when the world's great theologies were born. As man bowed the knee to his civic superiors, abasing himself to the very dust through fear, or the hope of favour, so he deemed it necessary to humble himself before his God. Power to the primitive man meant tyranny, violence, cruelty, and his simple-minded deduction from social data (with which he was often but too familiar) was logical. If earthly powers spread terror in their wake, and had to be placated, how much more must this be true of the heavenly Power!—that great mystery, represented as sitting somewhere in space, with unlimited power for vengeance. "Vengeance is Mine! I will repay, saith the Lord."

But, as the individual child grows, so does the collective child. The conditions above referred to were very different from our own,

albeit remnants of the old *régime* still linger. We still have Popes and kings, and there are still social cruelties and abuses of power, but man has begun at last to render himself an account of things, and to manifest his disapproval of them in an emphatic manner. In a word, the modern "axe" is laid at the root of the old tree, and its disappearance is only a question of time.

But, to return to our main point of interest: Granting, as far as actual data will permit, that the fact of immortality is established; in what form are we to go through eternity? The Bible speaks of "the last trump," when all the dead shall come forth from their graves and stand together before the "awful Judgment-seat." Not to dwell upon the inconceivable multitude of such a gathering, it might be suggested that many of earth's departed do not lie in "graves"; some are drowned, others burned, still others devoured by wild beasts—even by their fellow-men. What then? A man might be eaten by his fellow, and that fellow be eaten by a lion, and so on *ad infinitum*—not to mention the chemical and biological processes in ceaseless operation both in man and beast meanwhile.

Here is an intricate problem which might

stagger even an œcumenical council if handled *logically*. By such a body, however, it would be quickly despatched with a " God can do anything." That did seem a strong argument at one time, but the world is beginning rather to suspect it. Certain facts revealed by science are undermining this very convenient manner of disposing of practical difficulties. It has come to be a matter of demonstration that " God's laws " are as inflexible for Himself as for His most humble subject. We know that the constituent parts of a physical organism once disintegrated never reunite in the same shape. When the physical personality dies, each distinct element goes back to its initial state, fitted thus to enter into a new organism—forming a fresh personality. Is it not vain, then, to talk of " eternal life " for this physical body if insurmountable physical facts refute such a scheme? Still, for the sake of argument, grant that we are able to carry this earthly " tabernacle " with us ; what would be its adaptation to a world such as is pictured in all the varied and gorgeous descriptions of the Christian's heaven? The very little yet known of the heavenly bodies show how greatly the inhabitants of these various globes must differ from us and from each other. The density of

a planet, its weight, its size, its relative distance from its sun—all, or any one, of these facts suffice to modify given conditions. To attempt, therefore, to carry to a superior world this mundane physique, built with special adaptation—produced, in fact, by the very elements it operates in and upon—would be not only a violation of Cosmic mathematics, but would inevitably result in the annihilation of the entity we call individual.

Suppose now we turn to another point of view.

Despite the discouragement which seems to confront us on its material side, our hankering for immortality is none the less persistent. We have been taught to look at it as a birthright—a sequence to terrestrial life.

And the farther we proceed in upward growth, the more evident does it seem that this vital spark—in reality the essential man—must bear the immortal stamp. If matter cannot perish, we argue, how much greater should be the imperishable character of that element called "spirit." Is it less than logical to conclude that the finite soul is as eternal as the Infinite Soul, since it is a part of it? It seems safe to assume that the part is like the whole both in character and in destiny.

From such a point of view man's spiritual immortality should be gained beyond a doubt. Still, knowing as little as we really do of the universe, its character and destiny, it is not easy to carry our argument far on this line. And thus are we obliged to return to the everlasting mystery and the ever-recurring question:

What is the meaning of man's yearning for immortality?

Some day, we must believe, it will be satisfactorily answered—when man has grown far beyond his present intellectual stature. Now, the question, with all its surmises and fancies and word-painting, is vain—worse than vain. It encourages a belittling mediocrity of spiritual complacence. Its tendency is to arrest spiritual development and to condemn successive generations to time-honoured ruts. *What is bounded is limited.* All definition in spiritual matters to-day is so much fencing up; and if the definition be faulty, as it must be in man's present state, it can but result in the distortion of eternal truths—the very condition we are actually suffering from, and which has made the history of man's spiritual evolution a history of superstitions.

The true attitude, then, and the only rational one, is that of absolute, unquestioning trust

in the wisdom of the Cosmos, striving meanwhile to decipher the handwriting on Nature's wall and to conform to it.

A mind and heart capable of directing this stupendous universe with such unerring mathematics—demonstrated to the minutest detail of physical creation which we are able to observe, and are hardly yet beginning to appreciate—must be equal to the unaided ordaining of a spiritual world quite as complicated. And it cannot be doubted that the Eternal Geometrician is fully equal to the task of providing spiritual destinies without the prayerful dictation of any mortal.

What *is* should be accepted as *right*. Even were it not, we cannot change it, and the real ambition of every modern soul should be to make the most of its own individual opportunities for normal, harmonic development, convinced that thus, and thus only, can man render himself *worthy* that immortality for which he yearns. When he reaches that point in moral evolution he will understand why no "deathbed repentance" can find favour in the "Courts of Glory."

CHAPTER IX

THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER

'Quelle est l'action la plus effroyable que tu aies jamais faite?

"C'est d'avoir fait ma prière à Allah pour lui demander une faveur; car la prière n'est belle que lorsqu'elle est la simple élévation de l'âme vers les hauteurs" ("Les Mille et une Nuits").—J. C. MARDENS.

"As soon as man is at one with God, he will not beg. He will then see prayer in all action." —EMERSON.

PRAYER is a subject which may be approached here with reluctance, especially if one has learned to lisp a first prayer at a mother's knee. Its mere name may invoke the dearest associations of Christian childhood; and who will ever sufficiently estimate the moral strength that has been drawn from the family altar?

All mankind has lifted a voice in prayer and

felt its beneficial results—both materially and spiritually. Many a battle may be said to have been decided victoriously through its potent influence; and thousands—millions—are the "sore and sorrowing hearts" who have found sweet and lasting consolation at "God's footstool." Prayer, in fine, has been to the finite mind the one supreme mode of expressing its aspiration for communion with the Infinite.

To attempt, then, an analytic discussion of prayer—a subject so hallowed and intimate—may well seem like the touch of a profane hand, awakening an instinctive shudder. Still, the more intimate a human experience, the greater the need of its intelligent appreciation; and reason, cold though it be, is powerless to harm a spiritual stronghold grounded in truth—that is to say, in a fundamental fact in nature.

The simple logic of the situation here is the same that applies in every department of human experience. Everywhere may be observed a gradual yielding to the demands of rational examination. And, if society is ever to build on solid foundations, the crucial test is inevitable in the abstract as well as in the concrete.

As man advances in his evolutionary journey, the clouds of mystery which have carried in

them so many poetic wraiths and illusions are bound to drift away: with disturbing effects, ofttimes regrettable, it is true, though none the less good ultimately.

However, it is the spirit in which a subject is approached that should determine the moral effect of its handling. When that spirit is pre-eminently a desire for truth, the most sacred of human experiences may fairly be regarded as legitimate subjects of study. Prayer under such conditions becomes one of the most interesting of modern moral questions; and no question is more legitimate in the order of serious inquiry to-day than this:

What is the secret of the efficacy of prayer?

All through the history of civilised man are cited instances of remarkable answers to urgent appeals to the "Throne of Grace." What do such phenomena mean? Is it that a personal Deity "enthroned above" is occupied in directing the affairs of mortals agreeable to personal request? If so, and these requests are reasonable, is it possible to escape the inference that Omniscience was singularly wanting in His calculations regarding the needs of mankind at the beginning? What should be thought of a Creator who requires to be not only reminded of, but *urged* to do, His duty?

If you answer that the relation between God and His people is analogous to that of parent and child; why, then, those agonising appeals recorded to the glory of the saints? Does not a good father rather anticipate the wants of his child? And does there exist a parent worthy of the name who could take delight in the humble, agonising supplication of an offspring?

Shall we, then, attribute to God qualities condemnable in ourselves?

Furthermore, how is to be explained the fact of conflicting prayer with the granting of the apparently unworthy request? How is it that the "good" man's prayer may be in vain, in the face of "evil triumphant"? How is such anomaly to be reconciled?

It is easy to invoke the ready explanations with which we are all familiar, but they leave the question just where they find it.

The problem is not without its possible solution, however. If approached in the right way, dispassionately, without prejudice, these anomalies may be quickly reconciled, and apparent contradictions may clear.

To begin with, prayer, earnest prayer, implies an *uplifting of the soul*. It also implies BELIEF, confidence in an invisible Power: a Power hitherto considered by man so far

above, and foreign to, himself that its very conception has brought with it a sentiment of peace and security—forming a kind of armour of encouraging protection. The soul capable of complete absorption in prayer is a host in itself, before whom material as well as spiritual obstacles may be said to melt away. When Washington knelt at Valley Forge his whole soul was lifted in that reverent, trusting appeal to his God which has become historic ; and he went forth from that communion with the Infinite enveloped in an atmosphere of spiritual strength, sustained by a host of invisible forces. Likewise the great Cromwell, who hesitated not in the hour of victory to find therein an answer to prayer—and that, too, in defiance of the "Divine right of kings," even to the extent of making the awful price of such victory a crowned head.

Who has not remarked the power displayed in certain efforts wherein an individual had "put his whole soul"—that is, concentrated the vitality of his being? Whatever is done in the *might* of a moral conviction is a prayer in act—an arousing of the *soul's vitality*.

It is this soul vitality which brings victory in battle, success in business, consolation and endurance in affliction, and in it is summed

up that abstract *something*—not yet clearly defined—which is virtually the *all* of man. May not the "efficacy" of prayer, then, be said to consist in the arousing of this soul vitality —the intimate source of our moral strength? Is it not the exalted mental state induced by the attitude of prayer, together with the BELIEF in the unlimited possibilities of that "Higher Power" to which the prayer is addressed, which results in the actual creation of an individual force eminently superior to the psychological activity of one's ordinary life?

I am prepared for the spontaneous movement of dissent that will meet this suggestion—particularly if new to the reader—so disinclined are we to accept what we do not want to accept, and which conflicts with what we have been taught to believe. But to the open-minded such a point of view may be full of psychological revelation. Nowhere is there shown so strikingly the power of mind over matter; nowhere else is so emphasised the absolute dominion of the soul—the abstract in man. That familiar maxim, "The pen is mightier than the sword," is but an epigrammatic testimony to its truth; as is also the biblical rendering of a similar idea symbolised by faith, "Your faith shall make you whole," "If ye

have faith as a grain of mustard-seed." . . . Is not one of our most popular modern theologies founded upon this very principle? and does not its chief good consist in its tendency to emphasise the power of spirit over matter?

To illustrate still further the marvellous possibilities of this psychic force, let us observe its manifestation where no super-terrestrial claim is made. From the voluminous records of incredible achievement under violent moral impulse, let us take the case of an invalid who has been bedridden for years. She cannot move, has not for years been able to move without assistance. Suddenly a fire breaks out; the house is in flames; and before any one has time to reflect on her peril a form emerges from the smoke-enveloped threshold. It is the invalid, as quick and nimble to flee as any. Why? Because mind, for the moment, has dominated matter. Physical weakness is forgotten in the shock of the spirit. Danger of any kind, as we know, will suddenly develop powers and capacities to meet the urgencies of the situation which might appear impossible at ordinary times, and that because the *idea* of danger has aroused soul energy. There have been cases even where a great compelling

affection has kept the loved one hovering on the verge of the grave—unable to depart. And who is not familiar with the feats of the somnambulist, whose rational, sentient capacities are for the time being suspended?—another aspect of the same principle.

The wonders performed by this invisible, intangible, masterful soul-power have filled volumes and evoked the amazement of countless generations. St. Simeon on his column exhibited to the world a miracle in human possibilities through the obsession of this power; and the life of Saint Teresa is replete with its phenomena. The witchcraft of the Middle Ages, which terminated in such inhuman persecutions, is traceable to the same source. In fact, the whole history of mankind is but a record of the varied manifestations of this one distinguishing mark of Humanity's "rank in nature." If under certain circumstances man has insisted on calling such manifestations "Divine," in an erroneous conception of their source, he yet was not far from the truth. The great mistake has been the attributing of them to a far-off source—foreign to his own intimate personality, whereas the veritable seat has been *within*. Every individual carries in his own bosom the possibilities of the

Divine ; and it is there, and *there only,* that he must learn to look for its source if he would really possess "the power which removes mountains," and which alone is capable of transforming the human into the Divine.

To the possible objection that the treatment of our subject is lacking in clearness—is too metaphysical—I might reply in the much more concise terms of science, and define prayer as "auto-hypnotism," which, in final analysis, it really is. The moral attitude of the act, together with the conviction which inspires it, leads to the creation of a spiritual atmosphere. And herein lies the *secret* of the sustaining power supposed to come from ABOVE. This scientific term, however, has been so profaned by irreverent use and vulgar practices that one shrinks from its application in the present case. We do not yet fully understand hypnotism, nor recognise its all-pervading influence in social life. It is still in the phase of experiment, and is apt to be handled much as a sharp-edged instrument might be handled by a child. But it is none the less a great controlling fact in nature, and one more testimony to the power of mind.*

* What but hypnotic phenomena are those overwhelming and irrational popular outbursts which at given moments have lifted

It may not be amiss just here, in view of the difficulties attending all new perceptions, to call attention to the unmistakable evidence of *design* shown in the directing of Humanity's collective development.

"Milk," we are told, "is given unto babes." Is it metaphorical milk that an infant Humanity has been feeding on all these centuries? It would look so. Little by little the infant is reaching out for more solid food, and is finding it; albeit, its comprehending—digestive—capacity does not always tally with its fresh attainments. Consequently, the blunders, the mistakes registered to its discredit; but all must come out right in the end.

Man is destined ultimately, without doubt, *to know and to comprehend everything.* But it is by growth, alone, that this can be accomplished. Humanity will never jump into understanding; nor can we hope to possess knowledge transcending our *capacity for assimilation.*

individuals to the pinnacle of political honours, only to condemn them to the opposite, and equally irrational, extreme of denunciation and pursuit? The experience of a Necker is in point. Why is it so proverbial that "popular favour is unreliable" but because of these varying mental states which are apt to be provoked at periods of great popular excitement, where the unreasoning multitude may be swayed by the hypnotic power of controlling minds, or by the auto-hypnotic force of its own collective impetus.

Such standpoint would elucidate many of the perplexing problems continually presenting themselves to the thwarting of human ambition and longing—chief among which is the continued *impenetrability* of the hereafter. Like Moses beside the "burning bush," man is still unable to bear the light of the Divine Presence; otherwise expressed, his brain is not yet equal to the absorption of Cosmic truths in the highest. The Divinity within him is striving toward its complete finite expression; but as its sole instrument is the finite brain, its advancement must necessarily be gauged by the gradual expansion of that brain.

And this may be said to account for the multiple anomalies which seem to mark man's spiritual experience thus far, and to account, as well, for his very becoming, though unjustifiable, modesty concerning prayer, whose efficacy he thinks must lie in a super-terrestrial source.

An illustration of this attitude very much to the point is offered in the analogy between the phases of development passed through by the individual and the collective soul. We know to what degree fairy-tales and half-truths are suited to the intellectual requirements of childhood. We also know how fatal to normal

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growth would be the knowledge of certain physiological facts of which the young are kept in ignorance—*by a provision of Nature.* Is it not fully as apparent that like wisdom is displayed by that great undefinable "Providence," who, or which, is directing the collective growth of this "peculiar people"—earth's inhabitants? If, therefore, we have conceptions about causes and effects in natural phenomena at one epoch, bound to disappear in a succeeding one, that is not a matter of reproach. Such, apparently, is the scheme of Nature; and a most rational scheme, as must be readily conceived. There is, then, really no reason to hesitate in a frank acceptance of the undisguisable fact that CHANGE in ideal perception is one of the most fundamental principles of growth. Accordingly, even though it attack our most cherished beliefs, respect for truth should incline us to accept all its logical consequences. It is not easy, we know, to divest oneself of the sentiments of a lifetime; but untrammelled Reason can accomplish wonders when invoked by a *real desire to arrive at* TRUTH.

CHAPTER X

THE MAN CHRIST JESUS

> "*But whom do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God.*"—MATTHEW xvi. 15.
>
> "*We do not believe in the revelation of books and men, of histories and historical record. We believe in the infallible revelation of the Spirit—in the message that comes to man by the touch of the human spirit with the Supreme Spirit.*"
>
> —THE BRAHMO-SOMAJ.

THIS is another of those subjects approached with hesitancy—a subject hallowed by all the traditions of Christendom. And yet is there an alternative? The talismanic name of "Jesus" stands, naturally, for all there is in Christianity; and until we come to consider this GREAT PERSONALITY fairly and squarely on rational ground, no proper conclusions are possible in our growing religious controversies.

It is claimed, we know, that no really

authentic proof of the existence of Christ, as a historic character, has ever been shown. But what should that signify? The sublime thoughts and golden maxims attributed to a Christ are before us, an incontrovertible testimony. Somebody conceived the Sermon on the Mount; somebody had the Divine perspicacity to see through the hollow mockeries of established customs at that period, and to define the true character of a worthy life. Is not that in itself sufficient to answer any cavil on the subject of the real existence of Christ?

That such an overpowering influence did exert itself at that time no one can dispute. Whether it be of one mind or of several minds, it made an era, and has been instrumental in carrying humanity a long way in its spiritual development.

This admitted, all is admitted of universal significance. Christ needs no vindication. Personalities of such striking individuality are rare in history; and wherever they have appeared they have founded a "new religion"—that is, *a new theory of the Divine in man.* Whether it be a Buddha, a Zoroaster, or a Christ, the result is the same in the sense of a revivifying spiritual impulse, uniting in one lofty ideal great communities of men.

A fact not to be overlooked in this connection, however, is that tradition has never failed to attribute to the founders of such historic religions *supernatural* qualities. It is claimed for Zoroaster that he was in Paradise, where he experienced trials similar to those suffered by Christ on earth. He was born with a smile on his face, whereupon all nature smiled also. Flowers put on a hue of special brightness in his presence, and wise men came to honour him. His work began at the age of thirty, and he died a violent death. Equally extraordinary experiences are recounted of Buddha, Mohammed, and others. This fact is cited merely to show Humanity's never failing disposition to attribute extraordinary origin and virtues to its heroes. Did not the great Alexander allow himself to be regarded as a descendant of Jupiter Ammon?

There can be nothing strange, then, in the traditions regarding Christ; and they are really of no moment, considered from a *superior standpoint*. They show but the irrepressible tendency of the intuitions to associate all that is superior with super-terrestrial thoughts and images.

On the other hand, it is impossible to shut out the fact that the good accomplished by

these spiritual leaders is measured, in a large degree, by the age in which they flourish, or to which their thoughts are specially adapted, a fact which will be readily admitted in the orthodox world, as far as it concerns others. But how can we logically thus narrow its scope? Are not we of Christendom too near the historic tapestry in process of weaving, and too intimately a part of it, to be able to judge dispassionately *its* character? Habits of thought incline man to accept in his own case what he might severely criticise in another—what, in fact, is often so criticised. Consider for a moment the chasms that have opened between sects of the same fundamental theology.

Is it not true that what all Christians deplore especially among the heathen, is the worship of idols? And are not Christian Churches full of them?

Again, who of Protestant creed, visiting St. Peter's Cathedral at Rome, has not stood in amazement watching the *reverential* embraces of "St. Peter's" *toe* by the "faithful"? That colossal statue is said to have come down from the pagan era, and yet, to the critical Protestant, its ebony blackness is not more typical of the mental state of the pagan than of the actual worshipper.

Thus do we see how "circumstances alter cases," and how the parable of the beam and the moat is for ever repeating itself.

Far be it from the purpose of this argument to detract from the real merits of Christianity, or to deny the divinity of its central Figure. So far as the development and practice of its theology has been in consonance with the spirit of the civilisation to which it gave birth, Christianity has fulfilled its legitimate function. The simple idea advanced here is that it contains in itself its own limitations. A thing of the past, it must sooner or later be relegated to the past—becoming, at most, an important page in the history of Humanity's spiritual development.

We see in the light thrown across the centuries by the Nimbus of a Christ how exceptional His personality must have been. The soul of Christ modulated in FRIENDSHIP—the love of His fellow-men. And it was that particular quality of the soul that was most needed at that time, and has been most needed through all the long intervening years. It has been Humanity's greatest *humanising* lever. It must be said, also, that, as represented to us, there is no more touching and sympathetic figure in history than that of Christ. When we

shall be able to separate the name of Jesus from the maudlin sentimentalism which has dragged it, and continues to drag it, through the dust of commonplace, it will be effectually consecrated in the pantheon of the really grand spiritual apparitions upon this earth.

It is no longer in place, then, to discuss the divinity or the non-divinity of Christ—an idle discussion at any time for a self-confessed "worm of the dust"; and to discuss the question a thousand years, with no new data on the subject, would leave us as far from its solution as we are to-day.

In the abstract world men are all too apt to get astray in their premises, and to lose themselves in terms—words growing more and more to stand for things. Furthermore, to the ordinary mind the word "Divine" has always invoked the idea of something superhuman—above the mere mortal; the result of which has been the drawing of a sharp, impassable line between God and man, on one side of which abides Divinity, while the other side is reserved exclusively for the humble, undeserving creature.

Granting that this view had its good purpose once, and that it has served to lift the human and inspire mankind, it must be seen that

mental growth is gradually tending to obliterate that distinguishing line, and to awaken a suspicion that it may have been imaginary after all.

The longer man lives the more will he become convinced that the dividing line between heaven and earth is really indiscernible. Little by little he is coming to recognise that ALL he sees, all he ever has seen in his earthly experience, is but a manifestation of the Divine.

Finally, it may be added, the character of the vision depends on the eyes of the beholder. Humanity's spiritual eyes are not yet open.

CHAPTER XI

THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

> *"Le grand mal, celui qui détruit notre morale, et ménace l'intégrité de notre esprit et de notre caractère, n'est point de se tromper, ou d'aimer une vérité incertaine, mais de rester fidèle à ce qu'on ne croit plus entièrement. Le plus bel emploi de notre vie, a-t-on dit, c'est d'accroitre la conformité de notre intelligence à la réalité."*
>
> —J. C. MARDENS.

DOES no one feel the profound criticism implied in the above sentence? Do we ever speak of the "cause" of mathematics, the "cause" of chemistry, the "cause" of the planetary movements?

Has man yet to learn that *what is of God* needs no human defence or propaganda, and that what is positive, eternal must prevail though all mankind perish? How unaccountable, on rational ground, is the attitude of theologians on this subject! So engrossed do

they seem in the personal side of the situation, in the disastrous material personal results which must follow the breaking up of the Church, that they lose sight of its *real Divine* side altogether. And yet it requires but a cursory glance through history to discover the profound, far-reaching significance of this Church abandonment so solemnly discussed and bemoaned. Had these priestly leaders the spiritual vision claimed for their profession, they could but recognise in this widespread decline of conventional religious observance the unmistakable signs of its approaching decay, since Christ, if He be all the Church represents, is above the need of human aid. God's "cause" is His own, and none better than He knows how to advance it. Look ye how imperative are all His laws (as far as we are able to observe them), and how ingeniously compelling are all His designs in the scheme of human development. Whatever God *wants* man to do He *makes* him to do, and that, not by force—after the ignorant manner of humans—but by attraction. As the flower turns its sensitive petals to *its* God—the material sun—so man, consciously or unconsciously, turns his soul to *his* spiritual Sun.

Fear not, then, O ye of little faith, for the

security of God's "cause." If it be contained in the Church, all the "hosts of hell" could not prevail against it: and there could be given no greater evidence of the finite, mutable character of this tottering edifice than the very apprehension which exists regarding its precarious condition—what is Divine needs no human defence. Can ye not seize upon this fact, ye blind would-be leaders of the blind? Can ye not leave your beaten tracks, your pulpits, and your platitudes, and minister to the world in a fresh, living tongue—one intelligible to the modern intellect and adapted to actual human wants? Why longer waste time in fruitless effort to save an imperfect, transient expediency—that theological bridge over which our civilisation has crossed the chasm of dark-aged ignorance? It has done its work. Let it go, and turn ye to the next phase of spiritual growth.

This God whom ye assume to resemble, and to whom ye presume to dictate in your sanctuary prayers, is transformed. He resembles you no longer. He is rapidly taking on the stature of the cosmos, and a new horizon is opening to man's spiritual vision. Not the little self-centred globe, with its "chosen people," its Jerusalem, and other mundane

shrines to quarrel over: not that! but the great universe—the mighty brotherhood of unbounded space, and its attainment through an acquaintance with the laws governing the stupendous whole.

No longer children at the apron-strings of an ignorant nurse, to be put to sleep with fairy tales, but bold, impetuous youth, full of undefined aspiration, and bound to reach, sooner or later, the topmost rung of that great scientific ladder set up into the clouds of the Unknown. Such is the dawning ambition of the modern man, and nothing less is going to satisfy the insatiable soul-reaching of an emancipated Humanity.

It is not the "cause of Christ," then—in other words, the sanctuary—which is the crying want of to-day, but the *cause of Humanity*—the schoolroom, the sanely, hygienically organised home, the broad soulfulness which makes every man his brother's keeper; a society, in brief, based on truly moral principles—that is, in conformity with the laws of God, of which so much is preached and so little known. And to discover these laws will require a mind divested of all old traditional superstitions.

What can it avail, therefore, to look to any "Sacred Book" for maxims of actual life? A

people ignorant of the most rudimentary facts in nature, a people that could believe that the sun, at an individual's command, "stood still," is not a people capable of interpreting the Cosmos to a twentieth-century brain.

Their poetic rendering of primitive intuitions is often sublime, but their *science is null.* When the Bible was written men knew nothing of the great universe to which they belong. They would even have resented such wholesale classification, since their glory consisted in the very one-sidedness of which they boasted. Believing themselves to be the sum and substance of all that was worthy of Divine consideration, this small earth was to them the centre of creation; while they, in their little corner of it, enjoyed the exclusive monopoly of Paradise.

When the Church is embarrassed by such an arraignment, it takes refuge in the claims of inspiration. And what have not been the outrages to common-sense complacently enveloped in the "sacred" coating of "inspiration" and slipped down the spiritual throats of a gullible Humanity!

Ignorance alone has made this possible, and still makes it possible—to a great extent. Nothing, consequently, among our social duties

is so imperative as the giving of MENTAL LIGHT. When Humanity KNOWS the truth, it will invariably honour it. For, theories to the contrary notwithstanding, man delights to honour what he conceives to be the highest.

Gird up your loins, then, ye would-be defenders of Christ, and set forth in a new cause —that of Humanity. No field is more vast, none more promising. Therein will be found that fresh incentive to high endeavour which can but lead to the accomplishment of *real* "service to the Lord." Our vainglorious missionary expeditions will cease, or change their policy, when man's religious perceptions are more refined, and he has learned to respect the upward yearnings of the soul, however imperfectly expressed.

CHAPTER XII

THE CAUSE OF EVIL

> "*It is demonstrated that the soul is the seat of two sorts of evils: one, which by the masses is called wickedness, is evidently a disease of the soul; and that ignorance of which the soul is in so many ways a victim is its ugliness.*"—PLATO.

THE cause of evil is a problem which has occupied the attention of the human mind ever since conscious reason, somewhat developed and exercised, began to perceive and question the intuitions of order and harmony in the soul.

The query now arises, How shall the problem be finally solved after these centuries of vain questionings, and the fruitless, despairing efforts on the part of every people to escape evil?

Negatively, evil might be defined as the absence of GOOD. By the world generally, however, evil has always been regarded as a very positive and active quality, if not inherent in

the nature of man, at least imposed upon him by the malign influence of that dread personality popularly known as the devil. Strange as it may now seem, this Prince of Darkness, in some form, has been an indispensable factor in the creation of every moral system; while the strife said to be ceaselessly carried on between the powers of the nether and the upper worlds has been the basis of the morality of every people. The human soul may verily be said to have served as a kind of metaphysical battle-ground for these two contending forces—each possessing its agents or "angels," and each perpetually on the alert to profit by an advantage gained upon this much-disputed territory.

Such, virtually, has been the "religious" belief among all peoples (capable of belief) and in all time. Go as far back as you will in history, you are sure to find under some guise these two contending principles of Good and Evil. Occasionally the benign spirit of one age will, by some unaccountable evolutionary process, get to be the malign one of a succeeding age, thus offering a bit of variety in the matter of *rôles;* but the simultaneous existence of these two mysterious antagonists has never failed in the history of mankind.

An examination into this feature of psychological activity is curiously interesting, especially because of its most conspicuous trait—that is, Humanity's disposition to make evil as well as good *objective*. The untutored man sees everything *outside* of himself. If he is bad, the devil has made him so ; if he possesses any virtue, it is by the gracious condescension of some pitying, longsuffering God. Never a glance into that unexplored interior, growing rank meanwhile with the weeds of neglect—or worse than neglect, distorting teachings.

Do we ever think to ask ourselves the secret of this stultifying moral attitude—what is at its basis? Is it, it might be asked, the instinctive perception of an unattained ideal which causes man thus to abdicate his spiritual personality? Is it that the collective soul has been unconsciously waiting to be *big enough* to assume the dignified responsibility of its own moral acts? Possibly !

Certain it is there is a kind of mute, humiliating confession of insufficiency in this Humanity's bearing concerning the moral world.

Much is said of "heredity." Every crime in the calendar may now be set down to heredity ; and there is little doubt that this modern

scapegoat would offer some explanation for Humanity's actual moral nullity. There can be no denying that the spirit of the dark ages is still rife among us, despite great opposing influences.

However, this particular point need not be especially dwelt upon here. What we have to consider just now is that formidable problem of evil which seems to have mystified the world from the beginning of time. First let us ask, What is evil *per se?* We often go a long way and make a great effort to obtain what is close at hand. An ingenious scientist has defined "dirt" as "matter in the wrong place." May it not be said of evil with equal simplicity and *apropos* that it is *forces wrongly directed?* This definition might be elaborated, enlarged upon, for the sake of clearness, but the essence of the subject-matter is all contained in the epigrammatic statement. One needs but to glance over the contemporaneous world to find its confirmation on every side—from the exploding steam-engine to the bomb of the regicide.

All this, you will say, nobody disputes; but it explains nothing of the main problem. It is the CAUSE of evil that is the perplexing question. What is the *cause* of the existence

of this relentless enemy of mankind? Where is it to be found—in the Garden of Eden, dropping from the boughs of the "Tree of Knowledge"? In the nature of man, whom tradition declares to be "as prone to evil as the sparks are to fly upward?" Or is it in that awful region "where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched" that evil must be traced to its source?

To each of these propositions we answer unhesitatingly, No!

In the first place, *knowledge—perfect* knowledge—*never engenders evil*: the one is the antithesis of the other. As regards human nature, it is but fair to opine that, were the biblical appreciation of it true, man's complete degeneracy would long since have been achieved; for it is really the *innate* goodness of man which has been his guardian angel through all the moral crucifixion of his benighted experience—it has been the God in the Collective Soul that has saved Humanity in spite of individual or epochal aberrations. And, finally, if we consider the last supposed source of evil, may it not be assumed to have grown too mythical in the modern mind to be any longer regarded as the source of anything so serious as evil?

Thus are we brought back to the original question, What is the cause of evil? And to this question the only possible *irrefutable* answer is, IGNORANCE.

It would be idle to attempt to argue the point here. In another chapter the subject will be returned to, when occasion will be offered for its fuller demonstration. Meanwhile, it is well to leave the subject with the reflecting reader. If, upon a fair review of personal experience and observation, any *positive* evil is found to be untraceable to ignorance, a record of the same would be interesting. But it must be borne in mind that the problem is far-reaching. There are "causes," *direct* and *indirect*, as well as causes so remote in social evolution as to be partially, if not wholly, lost to the sight of the cursory observer.

CHAPTER XIII

PROSELYTISM

> "*You cannot change ancestral feelings of right and wrong without what is practically called soul-murder. . . . Barbarous as the customs may seem, always hear them with patience, always judge them with gentleness, always find in them some seed of good.*"—R. L. STEVENSON.

ONE of these days, when existing "religions" shall have been relegated to mythological history, it will be unbelievable that men have devoted so much time, spent so much money—to say nothing of the wear and tear of body and soul—for the simple purpose of proselytising.

Aside from the impertinence of the assumption implied in such an undertaking and its illogic, there have been to its discredit the but too often brutal, cruel methods of its accomplishment. It is illogical because rarely have

such efforts been associated with profoundly benign sentiments—hence directed especially for the well-being of the subject.

Needless to recall here the blackest pages of Church history (when *soul-rescuers* were fiends) in support of this statement. It were better to forget them. We do not any more roast alive, nor do we any longer mutilate the quivering body of the soul we aim to "save"; but missionary expeditions to "heathen lands" still go on, and missionary vicissitudes—alternate triumph and defeat—are still matters of ecclesiastical interest. The late troubles of this nature in China have been painful reminders of the fact. And not the least curious aspect of the matter is that it seems generally to be thought little less than criminal for the benighted subjects of such foreign spiritual solitude to fail of becoming appreciation. However, a little dispassionate reflection might suggest that, under the circumstances, the really surprising feature of it all is the docility—grace, even—ordinarily displayed by these heathen.

Their want of worldly wisdom, to begin with, renders them easy prey to the practical *savoir faire* of the *civilisé*. They are fascinated by his "superiority." But even the worm will

turn, and much takes place in these far-away lands of little credit to our boasted civilisation. The "enlightened self-interest" of many apostles of the "true faith" is little calculated in the long run to inspire admiration and confidence in these simple minds.

Referring to the operations of the Jesuits in China, a celebrated writer of the seventeenth century says: "They brought about the death of several, especially of two of the princes of the blood who had favoured them. Was it not lamentable that they should have come from the other end of the world to disturb the Imperial family, and cause two princes to perish by torture? They thought to enhance the credit of their mission by pretending that God had declared Himself on their side with signs of the cross—four of which He had caused to appear on the clouds of China's horizon. They [the Jesuits] had these four crosses engraved on their edifying and curious letters. But," adds the writer, "had God desired that China should be Christian, would He have been satisfied to put crosses in the air? Would He not rather have put them in the Chinese hearts?" A logical conclusion, surely.

To-day, it may be advanced, the spirit of the seventeenth century is outgrown. "Modern

missionary work is more intelligent." Certainly every age has its distinctive methods; but it is the *underlying principle* which determines the tendency of an effort. Unfortunately, the underlying principle of proselytism is FALSE. To try to coax or drive an individual from his faith is, to begin with, an assumption of superiority in spiritual matters unwarranted upon any actual, unimpeachable basis. In man's present psychological state of uncertainty and guesswork individual opinion—belief—ought to be fairly respected among all peoples. The *individual's belief is the gauge of the individual's intelligence;* and since—until man's morality shall come from within, rather than from without, as is now the case—belief is his only mentor in the devious and intricate paths of a crude spirituality, essay not to take it from him in the name of something better. Teach science, as Mohammed said so wisely. Instruct him in those truths which are demonstrable, unassailable. Let him comprehend the physical world, and in due time he will be able to rise to a nobler appreciation of the *spiritual* world.

In the significant words of B. B. Nargarkar, of the Bramo-Somaj of Bombay, at the

"World's Congress of Religions": "If the Christian missionaries have in them the meekness and humility and the earnestness of purpose that Christ lived in His own life, and so pathetically exemplified in His glorious death on the cross, let our missionary friends show it in their lives. We are wearied of hearing the dogmas of Christendom reiterated from Sunday to Sunday from hundreds of pulpits in India, and evangelists and revivalists of the type of Dr. Pentecost who go to our country to sing the same tune, only to add to the cares and confusion presented to the natives of India by the dry and cold lives of hundreds and thousands of his Christian brethren. They come to India on a brief sojourn, pass through the country like birds of passage, moving at whirlwind speed, surrounded by Christian fanatics and dogmatists; and to us it is no matter of wonder that they do not see any good, or, having seen it, do not recognise it, in any of the ancient or modern religious systems of India. Mere rhetoric is no reason, nor is abuse an argument, unless it be the argument of the want of common-sense. And we are not disposed to quarrel with any people if they are inclined to indulge in these two instruments,

generally used by those who have no truth on their side.

"For these our feeling is a feeling of pity—unqualified, unmodified, earnest pity; and we are ready to ask God to forgive them, for they know not what they say."

CHAPTER XIV

THE SUBSTITUTE FOR VANISHED CREEDS

"The old mystic tree of Knowledge should be grown once more, till its long superstition-dispelling branches shall encircle the globe."

To those of my readers who have had the patience to follow me thus far there may have come disquieting thoughts regarding that which is to replace these vanishing beliefs and practices.

And yet, were nothing to be offered in their place, would the criticisms to which they give rise be any less just, if well founded?

Are we still so young in the abstract world that, like infants learning to walk, our souls are ready to grasp anything in the shape of support?

Yes, such is our actual state; but, to a far greater degree than we imagine, is this state

perpetuated by what it feeds upon. This ceaseless reminding from time immemorial of man's helplessness—his utter inability to stand alone—has tended to suppress the soul's native strength and relegated it to perpetual leading-strings. Man has never dared to say his soul was his own where Church authority could intervene; nor is it many centuries since this Church-ridden soul belonged so little to its owner that his body might be tortured with impunity for the avowed purpose of getting such soul into the Church's heaven.

It is such moral tutelage that accounts for the prevailing moral flabbiness which stamps the ordinary individual. He has no definite conception of anything in the abstract realm, while his featherlike moral nature is ever at the mercy of the strongest ecclesiastical wind. One age may offer a scriptural interpretation which a succeeding age will systematically contradict. What matters that to the uncritical, unquestioning devotee, whose thinking on such subjects is conveniently provided for him? For so many generations has this spiritual torpor been cultivated and nurtured, it has become a species of heredity not to be easily shaken off, especially as every effort of the Church is directed to its maintenance.

Not that great *immediate* results are to be looked for upon the advent of individual thought and opinion: it is rather the enlarged, receptive state of mind, which such exercise must produce, that is called for to-day. Preliminary to mental growth is a conception of its need and possibility.

The first step, then, toward higher spiritual life is spiritual emancipation from this old benumbing tutelage. The stumbling-block of AUTHORITY in realms of the UNKNOWN must be set aside; we must come to understand that there is *no human authority*—can be none—*where nobody knows anything.*

Then it will be in order to seek a substitute for vanished creeds. Then, too, we shall be better prepared to comprehend the vastness of this mighty subject, hitherto dwarfed to the dimensions of finite mind.

The deeper we penetrate into the various departments of Nature, the more it becomes evident that the operations of man are never so sure as when under the guidance of her laws, a fact well established in the concrete sciences, where no one attempts any more to act arbitrarily—the folly as well as the danger of so doing having been too often demonstrated with fatal consequences. But in the abstract

realms there have been no exploding steam-engines or sizzling electric wires to call man to order. He has here enjoyed a kind of *carte blanche,* and he has employed it to involve himself in a labyrinth of abstract extravagances.

What is required of Humanity now is the simple recognition of the fact that Nature's laws, and these only, are able to solve the mysteries of the abstract as well as of the concrete world. And, since to apply these laws we must first know them, it is very evident that it is their discovery which is to become Humanity's supreme ambition. Instead of speculating on the "nature of God," the "Great First Cause," and the "future life," all of which man's finite brain, though it should speculate millions of years, is powerless *alone* to determine, the aim of an enlightened age should be to operate in harmony with Nature —that is, in accordance with her principles, to undertake her study honestly, divested of all preconceived notions on the subject.

Such is the programme, and the only one that can possibly lead to a worthy substitute for vanished creeds—such alone can lead to the *Absolute.* But the work involved in such a programme is immense—immeasurable! It

is scarcely yet conceived of. It is the earth's prophets only who have seemed to catch glimpses of the glories to be revealed to Humanity through such discovery, and who have attempted to discourse thereon in every age.

If we admit the principle of mathematics in the universe, we must also admit the logic of the premises here set forth. Should not this suffice to inspire the race with confidence in its destiny and encourage the belief in a future "substitute" eminently superior to present vanished creeds?

And, finally, ye quibblers for a spiritual *statu quo,* know that creeds vanish of themselves. No human could destroy a "living faith," any more than malign microbes can prey upon a healthy organism. It is only when death strikes, that is made possible the disintegrating process which but accomplishes the foreshadowed dissolution.

PART II

CHAPTER I

RELIGION AND CIVILISATION

Thus far I may very properly be accused of "tearing down"—a comparatively light undertaking. Thus far, too, the sole subject under discussion has been "religion"—the purely abstract side of man's social life.

But no feature of human experience can be fairly considered isolatedly. A social organism is a unit, every one of its parts dependent upon the integrity of the whole; the recognition of which fact must make evident the vanity of criticism, as well as of attempts at reform, in one department alone. To be of any practical value, therefore, the preceding chapters must be incorporated in a much broader field—a field the scope of which is no less than the whole of civilisation.

Upon such premises the reader will readily perceive the point of view from which it is proposed to continue our subject, in which religion *per se* is but a significant part.

To begin with, then, it may naturally be

assumed that if the theology which has given its stamp and its name to the civilisation with which we are familiar is admitted to be on its decline, that civilisation itself must be similarly conditioned. Such a state has, indeed, already been more than hinted at by certain keen observers of the modern world, not a few inclining thus lightly to dispose of the question. It is not, however, to be thus lightly disposed of. Things do not decline without their sufficient cause; and to arrive at a clear understanding of the cause in this case is a collective *duty* not much longer to be put aside.

What, we have a right to inquire, is the difference between a vital social organism and one recognised to be on its decline? It will not be disputed that, so long as a social organism can be maintained in its integrity—that is, all the parts operating together with healthy results, and promoting a satisfactory play of the psychic forces acting therein—it is good, vital, sufficient for its day. But history shows how every such organism thus far has been affected by time—in other words, growth. When this enemy to stability in all finite things has brought about a civilisation's degeneracy through abuse, or has proved the inefficacy of its institutions through increased mental de-

velopment, or has discovered them to be altogether erroneous for the same reason, then begin those attacks which denote decline—isolated and timid at first, gaining courage with increasing numbers, and leading finally to eccentric, one-sided efforts at reform. Then it is that such civilisation enters upon its inevitable downward course. The wedge of disintegration has been introduced—its sequence is but a matter of time.

This our Christian civilisation has been disintegrating and "reforming" for centuries —not the least interesting feature of the process being the utter oblivion of the inevitable *dénoûement* prevailing generally. It was thought four centuries ago, with the REFORMATION, that all wrongs were then to be righted. "The Church has become corrupt," exclaimed the zealous reformer; "we will leave her and start anew, returning to the direct authority of Holy Writ, so long neglected or distorted by the degenerate Fathers. Every man shall read it for himself, without priestly intervention, and be guided thereby to eternal life." The Bible, which had been lost sight of under the prohibitive rubbish of dogma, was to become all-potent and sufficient to the exigencies of the reformatory undertaking. Does not Luther, in

his exalted hallucination, make use of it to hurl at the devil? Simple-minded Luther! Could he have guessed the real meaning of that crude, honest effort; could he have seen the end from the beginning; could he have realised that his *rôle* was to be nothing less than that of a gigantic dislocating wedge in the very foundations of the great Christian edifice, would he not rather have "given his right hand to be burned" than to have used it to have nailed up on the door of the Wittemberg Cathedral those celebrated theses!

When he declared Copernicus to be an "upstart, an astrologer, and a fool," he little dreamed that the name of his distinguished contemporary was destined to be indissolubly associated with universal law, while his own must ultimately go down to posterity as representative of a blind instrument in the confounding of theological dogma.

It is not sure that Luther himself was entirely free from misgivings regarding the ultimate effects of his protestations against the infallibility of the Church and ecclesiastical traditions, when he became aware of their practical results generally. The following declaration, made by him at the close of his life, would seem conclusive on this point:

"It is a strange thing, and veritably sad, that, after the pure doctrine of the Evangile has been again brought to light, the world has not ceased to grow worse, each one interpreting Christian liberty in the sense of carnal indulgence. If I could, in the face of my conscience, take the responsibility, I would advise—even aid—the Pope, with all his abominations, to re-become our master: for it is thus that the world wants to be governed—by severe laws and superstition." *

And it might be said that many of the successors of Luther are scarcely advanced beyond him in a grasp of the real situation. Not a few, like Luther, would still nail up the "Theses," and still moralise upon the poverty of their results, not even recognising that to-day the situation is more hopeless than in Luther's time—that the world, in spite of itself, has grown.

However, no sane divine would to-day be tempted to hurl his Bible at the devil, a personality so wellnigh extinct (under his old aspect, at least); and yet how few there are of sufficient conviction and courage to effectually disperse that terrifying myth.

* Hartmann, "Religion of the Future."

Now, we repeat, what is the real situation on this subject, and how is it to be met?

Is it, or is it not, a fact that this collective organism which has carried upon its bosom a small fraction of the great human family for nearly twenty centuries seems finally to be going to pieces?

Everybody is familiar with the accepted philosophy regarding civilisations in general. History, we are told, is but a record of the "rise and fall of nations," from which it is sought to establish a universal theorem that civilisations are born, rise to their zenith, decline, and die, a fact so patent in the experience of mankind that it as assumed to be a law in social evolution. And it, no doubt, is, up to a certain point in such evolution. It is, in fact, one of the characteristics of Humanity's collective immaturity. So long as the collective soul is *groping* its way, possessing no exact universal guides concerning means and processes of social organisations, nations cannot do other than "rise and fall," since they necessarily carry within them the cause of their decline. Such civilisations are what may be called empirical, experimental civilisations. They have followed each other in logical succession, each indicative of the degree of

advance in mental and moral development attained by the successive races, each in turn giving way before the superior physical power and moral force of its conquering successor. Now, since men usually reason from the known to the unknown, what would seem more natural than to imagine that what always has been always will be?

Suppose we should fix our attention for a moment upon a fresh system of examination into this perplexing social problem. The present argument would undertake to show that there may be something better than empiricism in social organisation, and that it is toward this higher policy that Humanity is tending. Thus far mankind has walked by FAITH—a precious and effective instrument—for its primitive guidance. Faith has been the rushlight in the wilderness of the inexplicable. The day is approaching when *knowledge* must take the place of faith, when the effulgence of science shall illumine the dark places and "make the hitherto crooked paths straight."

As a premise to our argument, however, it must be shown that certain evolutionary processes manifest in all creation—animate and inanimate—enter as fully into the elaboration of a social organism, Humanity's collective

body, as they do into that of the animal organism, the individual body, which processes may be distinguished for our purpose into three great stages, each with its marked characteristics. They are: first, the embryonic stage ; second, the simple-organic stage ; third, the compound-organic stage.

The first, the embryonic stage, embraces, as we know, the formative period—that in which the thing being created is going through its primary processes of organisation.

The second stage will, perhaps, seem less familiar to the reader—his attention never having been directed to the fact that what is here called the " simple-organic " stage must necessarily be passed through by every organism or structure without exception before it can fulfil its ultimate function or destiny. A little reflection, however, will suffice to make this apparent. In the case of the child, there must first take place education, discipline, culture, on the one hand, physical growth and development, on the other ; all of which simple organic, transitional, preparatory period extends from birth to puberty, when the individual shall have reached the compound-organic stage—that is, the period of its complete functional possibilities and the possible realisation of its destiny.

Man offers the most striking illustration of this presentation, since in the individual a "destiny" is recognised, a point not yet reached collectively. If we would study the same processes in the inanimate realm, take, for instance, an edifice. Here, it will be readily seen, the embryonic stage applies to the preparing and assembling of the materials and their employment in the architectural whole. The simple-organic stage would cover the period of cleaning, embellishing, furnishing, and organising the interior of the same, preparatory to its functional use, which is its purpose or destiny—its compound-organic stage. Similar examples might be multiplied *ad infinitum*, as who will may demonstrate.

"All very interesting," some one remarks; "but what has this to do with our subject, which is civilisation?"

Everything, dear reader, if the premises here offered are properly founded. And who will dispute them? If every form of human experience is subject to these distinct, successive processes, if individual development itself is governed by them, how should it be expected that a social feature as great as a civilisation could escape them? It is fair to admit that this may be a point of view not hitherto

entertained, but to question its fitness is scarcely possible in the face of demonstrable proof.

If you ask why such a point of view, if applicable to society, has not hitherto been entertained, allow me to reply that it is because of the absence of any general conception of Higher Social Destinies—because the collective mind has not yet risen to a conception of its unity with the universe. Its social horizon has never extended beyond the visible, tangible phenomena surrounding it. Consequently, in creating society—Humanity's collective body—it has never dreamed of aspiring beyond the immediate terrestrial needs of that body. Each particular race or people, as already stated, has been exclusively absorbed in building up its separate, individual social structure according to what it conceived proper for its best *immediate* individual existence.

We are not ignoring the fact that among the institutions composing such social organisations "religion" has invariably had its place; but it is pertinent to remark that thus far all religions have been supposed to concern the *future* rather than the present—thus making religion a thing apart, adapted to special times and special needs—but vaguely associated with

man's everyday, commonplace existence. Theocracies, it is true, have always assumed to be directed—even to the details of terrestrial life—by a "Thus saith the Lord." Nevertheless, it will scarcely be denied that while such forms of government were carried on ostensibly in the name of Divinity, the intimate nature of such "Divine authority" generally bore rather a mundane aspect.

Consequently, although it may savour rather of inconsistency to accuse of a want of conception of "higher social destinies" civilisations every one of which has been founded upon "religion," we hope to make it appear less so with the development of our argument; not forgetting that any criticism of society, to be effective, must take into consideration the fact that mankind in every age has done the best it could, and, what is equally evident, that every age has added its mite to that amelioration of human conditions which is steadily going on. Were never a book to be written, nor a criticism offered, society would none the less continue to move onward, however slowly, simply because (all the pessimists to the contrary notwithstanding) that is its normal direction. But there is a difference between *intelligent* progress and instinctive progress.

To be able to render oneself intelligent account of what is going on by a comprehensive outlook, is a great satisfaction in any sphere, how supremely so in a sphere which takes in ages that are past and ages to come! Our aim then, is, by a fresh organic view, to try to reach this comprehensive outlook upon the social world in its successive evolutionary phases. To do which obliges us to begin by studying society in the light of the three stages already described, precisely as we would study an organism of any other character. And, unwelcome as such an assumption will doubtless be, we are starting out with the hypothesis that all the forms of civilisation thus far known (our own not excepted) are to be classed in the embryonic stage of Humanity's great social elaboration. Proof of which must be offered by showing wherein their leading characteristics correspond with those of a similar stage recognised as such in familiar realms.

What, then, let us ask, are the characteristics of the embryonic stage generally? If we examine them in the human embryo, which is the most familiar to us, we find: *Disproportion of parts*—the size of the head almost half of that of the body at certain stages; *pre-*

dominance of the material principle, all, in fact, being material—what we call "spirit" not yet being born; *individual isolation; absence of light; oblivion of destiny.*

All these, as we know, are conspicuous, general characteristics of the individual embryo, and they will be found equally prominent, all of them, in the collective embryo—our actual society. Note, for instance, the simple detail of *disproportion of parts:* mark the pauper and the millionaire; observe the glaring inequalities conspicuous in every department of social life: spiritual and intellectual dearth overlaid with superficial refinement, sensual luxury combined with moral misery, precepts of virtue side by side with practices of vice. Pages might be filled with illustrations of this single characteristic, so obtrusive to-day; and the *predominance of the material principle* is certainly not less so. One might almost say here, as of the human embryo, that all is material, both in Church and State: the overshadowing ambition among all classes being the superlative in *physical* wellbeing. Fine houses, fine churches, each successive temple to our God vying as far as possible with its predecessor in architectural grandeur and adornment; priestly accessories: altar

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ornaments, images, relics, what not in the line of *appeal to the senses!* Everywhere, in both private and public life, it is the material principle which prevails, constantly encroaching and gaining ground. And how could it be otherwise when our practical, if not our theoretical, God is GOLD. This last feature, it is but fair to say, belongs peculiarly to periods of national decline. It is not only a token of materialism, but of materialism intensified—significant of degeneracy.

A psychological principle worthy of remark just here is that the predominance of the material is always in direct ratio with poverty of spirit.

When the soul becomes a desert, swept by the sands of a dried-up faith, it is SENSE that fills the vacuum. And sense unspiritualised knows no bounds. It grows by what it feeds upon. Would you bring home this fact in the unchallenged testimony of history? Listen to the stories of those who tell of "the rise and fall of nations"; mark how in their descriptions of the "fall" they invariably throw into relief the *materiality* of all social interests—the one unmistakable sign of a civilisation's decline.

"*Individual isolation*" will be recognised in

the sentiment of distinct nationalities which has *always* prevailed: races separated and antagonistic, international hostility and war, national exclusiveness universal, of which the word "patriotism" is the idealisation.

Many who rejoice in the growing away from these old racial and national prejudices may incline to look upon the above picture as overdrawn. But are not the very efforts of the modern world to overcome these sectional conflicts, with their brutal troop of disastrous consequences—bloodshed, rapine, conquest—a testimony to the unhappy facts here cited? Do we need more than the spectacle of the bristling bayonets offered by the combined civilisations of the world to-day to support the above argument? Actual conditions are not without their redeeming features, we admit, inasmuch as they are recognised with regret to-day, whereas scarcely a century ago they were looked upon as a legitimate part of national policy.

It is needless to dwell upon the accentuated proof of the feature of "*isolation*" offered by those outlying nations whose influence has been null in modern civilisation and whose doors, until very recently, have been hermetically closed against the Western world.

Absence of light: that condition in the

human embryo—shut away from the vivifying influence of the material sun—is a type of Humanity's actual spiritual darkness. Proof that our spiritual sun has not yet risen may be sought in our irrational, absurd, material theologies, showing that man as yet knows NOTHING of his spiritual destiny, which fact constitutes a striking illustration of the analogy claimed to exist between the individual and the collective embryo—both being *oblivious* of ultimate destiny.

Now, for the sake of those whose *amour-propre* finds it difficult to accept the foregoing social classification, be it remarked that it can reflect no discredit upon any one. Every stage in evolution is interesting; and the first is as important as the last—more so in a sense, since it makes the last possible. Moreover, it must be seen that a name changes nothing in actual conditions. Whether this present civilisation is acknowledged to be at the beginning or at the end of Humanity's possibilities affects in no wise real achievement. Whereas, to one capable of universal ambition, the thought of belonging to a race which is moving toward noble social destinies must produce a certain satisfaction, even though one be individually deprived of the joy of participating therein.

Besides, as has been remarked, whatever may be individual sentiment on this great subject, can facts be altered thereby? Is there any logic or permanent satisfaction in a refusal to recognise conditions which grow daily in evidence? If, on the contrary, we allow ourselves to be guided by this idea of superior, more worthy collective destiny, it will be easy to account for many things in modern social phenomena which now defy logical explanation. The instant we attain to a proper recognition of the place of our civilisation in evolutionary development, and are thus able to consider disagreeable facts in their true light, we shall cease lamenting over existing conditions and begin to treat them logically—hence effectively. In this new light it will be easy to see that certain evils very commonly bemoaned *are consequent upon existing conditions,* and that while the one lasts the other must also last. Moreover, this will explain the *inefficiency of counteracting efforts found to be so inexplicable in certain cases,* where preaching and moralising and reasoning prove all to no purpose—and that despite a general recognition and condemnation of the evil in question.

Why is this? Has nobody ever suspected that it might be because we were "kicking

against the pricks"? A recognition of society's embryonic stage would render it more than a suspicion. It would convince society's doctors that the maladies they are striving to arrest are beyond their actual therapeutical science. The so-called "social evil" is one of these. It takes root in a fundamental principle, of which the visible manifestation is but a distracting sign—a sign which our would-be social "reformers" ARE NOT YET ABLE TO INTERPRET.

And this brings us again to the consideration of the "cause of evil," a subject our readers have already been invited to reflect upon. This oft-reiterated question: What is the cause of evil? is one which the world generally is disposed to look upon as involved in unfathomable mystery.

"Why is it," men ask, "that an *omnipotent* God permits the world's turpitudes?" "If God can do anything, why did He not make man perfect in the beginning?" "Why ordain things in a manner calculated to produce so many evils—so much sin and sorrow?"

There are not a few theories on this subject, most of which are familiar to us all. The great traditional theory—the one upon which the Jewish and Christian theologies rest—is that man *was* made perfect in the beginning, but

"fell." A similar idea underlies the old Egyptian religion, as well as of most others; and its substratum is EXPIATION—that world-wide obsession of the human race, out of which have sprung all its bloodthirsty gods. The death of Osiris was the atoning sacrifice of the Egyptians.

An attempt to analyse this very significant passion in primitive Humanity would take us too far from our point; but it is not unedifying to notice its gradual modification with the passing of the ages. Man's predominating instincts enregister his psychological rank. Trace through history this one of *revenge, expiation,* if you would measure the extent of the journey UPWARD already accomplished by this "fallen creature"; albeit, he still erects guillotines—still offers the official spectacle of cutting off heads in the name of expiation, to the accompaniment of savage *vivas* and ribald song, while his hope of heaven continues to be based on a "Christ crucified."

But to return to our question, What is the cause of evil?

The definition already offered is, doubtless, far from satisfactory. A first impulse may lead one to shrink from being told that he suffers through ignorance: he would much prefer to

find the source of his ills outside of himself. Suppose, then, we turn the question, and approach it from another side.

To begin with, a very primary principle in terrestrial affairs must always be borne in mind when considering this subject. That is the principle of *growth*. The modern term for this well-recognised process is "evolution." Now, it is very easy to observe that evolution and a miracle-working, arbitrary Omnipotence (however omnipotent) do not harmonise. The one operates slowly—by degrees; the other is supposed to take no account of time. Again, *perfection is immutability*, consequently foreign to human experience. There is no life without action, and action may be translated into evolution—change. Must it not, then, necessarily follow that in a world whose entire underlying principle is growth—that is, *perpetual change*—it was impossible to start out with a *perfect* Humanity?

Phidias made a perfect man, one whose geometrical proportions and æsthetic charm immortalised the name of the creator. But he was of marble, or of gold and ivory—hence inflexible and immutable. What he was twenty-four centuries ago that we would find him to-day if we could behold him.

Would you make Humanity likewise? The difference between the marble of a Phidias and the flesh and blood of mankind is all the difference between statics and dynamics. Man works with what we call "matter," God works with FORCES. The creations of man are stationary —fixed: God's go on for ever. And therein consists their superiority, as well as their infinite possibilities, with all the inevitable incidents of growth inseparable therefrom—imperfection, ignorance, experiment, mistakes, and failure—with the assurance of *ultimate knowledge, success,* and the *fulfilment of destiny.*

Now, despite the traditions of that "Golden Age," when men are assumed to have been "perfect"—fresh from the hands of the Creator and as yet undefiled by *inherited depravity*—it must be evident that if the great scheme of Nature for the attainment of her purposes is *growth,* she could not do otherwise than have man begin at zero. It was impossible that he should form an exception to the general principle governing the terrestrial development—to say nothing of universal development. Being, consequently, at the foot of his social hill, he had to climb; and the steeper the ascent the better, for with every fresh effort he has acquired fresh spiritual muscle.

It is also evident that on starting out Humanity had a long, hard road. Difficulties innumerable have confronted every step in advance—not the least of which has been IGNORANCE.

It follows, then, that having set out on his long journey utterly without guidance except that "still, small voice" within, the collective man could scarcely be expected to have offered primitive interpretations of the same still, small voice other than childish and fantastic. Still, these very interpretations have had their evolutionary value; their significance has been great in a moral sense, and when regarded in their historic unity their results are already immense.

Now let us ask, Are not the vicissitudes inseparable from man's progressive history *alone sufficient* to account for the manifold "evils" of which he complains? Observe the simple beginnings of the individual career, mark the myriad blunders, mistakes of commission and of omission, where the most guileless motives may bring about disaster. Witness the little girl of three, who to stop the steam coming from a tea-kettle spout imagined no better instrument than her tongue. She was ignorant of the nature of steam, and in her case experi-

ence proved a rough teacher. But have not her seniors been guilty of quite as absurd mistakes, and is it more than natural that they should suffer the unhappy consequences?

Again, note the failure upon failure to attain a personal end which is courageously striven for. And note as well, when finally crowned with success, how the victor is almost, if not quite, ready to declare that his chief satisfaction lies in the wholesome exercise of body or mind occasioned by the effort.

In all this, dear reader, if regarded dispassionately, may be discovered the great *secret* of "the cause of evil." The modes of its manifestation have been legion, unquestionably, but that they all have been but *natural* consequences of conditions producing them scarcely admits of a cavil.

If, for the sake of pointing a moral, we consider a moment that widespread, almost universal, evil called disease: Do you imagine for an instant that disease settles down upon you as might a butterfly—a mere haphazard caprice? Do you not know that disease means one of Nature's broken laws? or perhaps a whole host of such laws broken—hence *ignorance,* since it is unimaginable that you would deliberately, wilfully injure yourself.

Our embryonic societies build monuments to disease: disease of body and disease of soul—the hospital and the prison. They do not know any better. The day will come when both these forms of disease will have disappeared, and the prison and the hospital will be tenantless. Many there are, of course, ready to smile at such an Utopian perspective now; but it is safe to opine that their number will have greatly decreased in fifty years, for we are destined to witness social wonders in the next fifty years. Indeed, the medical world is already beginning to perceive foreshadowings in this direction. As intelligence, in the shape of hygiene, advances, medicine must recede. And it should be remarked just here that one of the most lamentable deficiencies in our embryonic system of education is the absence of *proper instruction in physiology and hygiene*. Physiology, *really the most vitally important of all the sciences,* is totally ignored in our popular educational curriculum. Why? Why are the uninstructed masses thus abandoned to the accidents of their crude, perverted instincts, without instruction in the most simple rules of normal existence? Ignorance presides at every family table, at every toilet; she stands menacingly on the threshold of every bridal

chamber; and more pitiable than all are the cradles rocked beneath her blighting shadow. In every department of individual, personal experience, in fine, stalks this demon Ignorance; while the helpless, unsuspecting victims thereof are left to pursue their haphazard course of law-breaking, death-dealing devices. And this in lands boasting of their systems of education, where the youth of the community is ostensibly "taught" in common schools! And why is this? Simply because our embryonic societies do not *know* any better. They have conceived that the masses should be taught to read and write, but they have not yet reached the point of conception that they should first be TAUGHT TO LIVE.

Returning to our point: it is surely not too much to assume without further argument that the general definition here offered of "the cause of evil" covers the ground on the basis of principle. A closer examination into the subject would reveal two distinct classes of terrestrial phenomena as coming under the head of evil. There is a class of evils, as we have seen, inseparable from progressive organisation—resulting from fragmentary, disjointed, inharmonic, transitional states — reflecting themselves both positively and negatively.

Then there are those positive, active evils ordinarily looked upon as the operations of *malign* forces—design. About the first there no longer exists much mystery: when evils in the shape of accidents now happen in the practical world men are not slow to trace them to their legitimate causes. But the second, more personal, more intimate, seems still to baffle the philosophy of the would-be moralist. Here it is that the "devil's handiwork" is traceable everywhere. And what volumes have not been required to explain the demoniacal operations of this satanic majesty! Even a twentieth-century press may lend its columns to a lengthy, detailed description of a ceremonious exorcism of the devil.

It is a striking fact that, simple as TRUTH is always found to be, when it *is* found, human methods for its discovery are usually of the most complicated character. The cycles and epicycles of Ptolemy have repeated themselves in every sphere of finite reason. In the case of the one before us, having constructed his profoundly complicated theory on the subject of SIN, man proceeds to deduce therefrom his logical conclusions.

But why, is it not reasonable to ask, seek causes so far-fetched when they appear more

than sufficient right here in our familiar midst? Why have we recourse to an "infernal region" for a source which every phenomenon in nature makes evident? We know, for instance, that if a tree grows crooked it is because of some distorting or oppressive condition bearing upon it. If a plant is found drooping, perishing away, we look at once for a physical, demonstrable cause. We do not in either of these cases imagine some abstract "curse" falling upon a victim of conditions claimed to have been occasioned æons before. What is the difference? Why, in the face of such rational conclusions on the one hand, is man capable of such irrational ones on the other?

Simply because untutored minds, confronted by phenomena which their limited science could not explain, had recourse to super-sensual—hence mysterious—sources; and apparent evils, untraceable to physical causes, had necessarily to arise from some moral transgression calling for punishment.

This small word "sin" has occasioned more wretchedness, cruelty, hypocrisy, crime than any other in the human vocabulary.

In the first place, it has robbed the race of a true sentiment of dignity, reducing man to the *rôle* of a helpless jumping-Jack—the play-

thing of Fate. It has also made possible all the atrocities which blacken the pages of history. The idea of "sin," in fact—*an inherent, inherited sinfulness*—has been the *spiritual spectre* of a self-condemned Humanity. What deeper ignominy could be imagined for the robbing of man of his birthright as the highest embodiment of Cosmic wisdom on this planet? Then, too, the constant obsession of that one, selfish idea of escape from "the wrath to come," with all the racking uncertainty attaching thereto; and, as if to add to the desperateness of the situation, the assurance of man's personal helplessness in the matter! This theory, that no act of his, however meritorious, could secure salvation, has reduced man to a spiritual beggar—inclining him to accept anything offered in the guise of "religion," provided it made possible his escape from that hell "where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched."

The day will come when mankind will scarcely credit its own religious history. That such a brutal barbarity could be conceived as the crucifixion of a God—and that to ransom a Humanity—will seem too monstrous to be believed. And if this shall seem incredible, what of the tremendous results—*beneficial*

results—flowing from such a philosophy? It was a veritable "redeeming" influence during the period of honest conviction in its propaganda, at the fall of Rome, in the midst of the chaotic degeneracy of pagan gods and social conditions, in which it really seemed that the spiritual world had gone mad. All of which stands as an ineffaceable witness to the measure of man's intellectual scope, as well as of his spiritual altitude at that time. When, in an enlightened future, the bald, unvarnished facts of Church "history" shall be unearthed, they will appear as so many spiritual fossils, awaking in their sphere as much amazement as do the prehistoric animal forms unearthed to-day and catalogued for the benefit of our natural history museums. Dug from the hidden recesses of the silent page, they will constitute an indisputable record of a spiritually saurian age—phantoms of a crude, inharmonic past.

I am not unprepared for the hostile, dissenting attitudes to which such an appreciation of past and contemporaneous spirituality must give rise; nor am I oblivious of the refuting arguments so readily advanced regarding the *positive* fact of the existence of "sin." Do not the court "dockets" of every civilised

nation, together with the prisons perpetually peopled by them, stand conspicuous for my confusion—lamentable witnesses to the truth of the biblical assumption of man's inherent depravity and proneness to evil. "Is not," may be insisted, "every moral law trampled upon? Were it not for our police and our repressing official control, would not the world be a pandemonium?"

And it must be admitted that the argument is not unplausible on its surface, since, as organised at present, society could not produce conditions other than those with which we are familiar. And Humanity has never known anything different. From the "thus saith the Lord" to the "so commands the law" there has been but one fundamental social policy from time immemorial—which policy is RESTRAINT; in other words, Humanity has never yet risen above COMPULSION for the carrying on of its systems of civilisation. In other words, again, there has never been manifest in man's social policy the first glimmer of an intelligent conception of Nature's policy in dealing with her subjects—hence of *true* MORALITY. There exists, in fact, no morality at all; and it is almost an irony to talk of morality in civilisations such as have been produced thus far.

Consequently, what men call "sin"—the perverted, discordant, "criminal" action of psychic forces operating in an organisation unsuited to them—seems to justify that disparaging criticism of man's moral nature which has been handed down from age to age with unquestioned acquiescence; albeit, such criticism is about as rational as it would be to condemn a bursting steam-boiler after carefully closing all its safety-valves. True, in the latter case the result of such closing would risk being too immediate and fatal; hence the exercise of a little common-sense is *forced* upon the experimenter. But that psychic steam with which mankind has been experimenting, with more or less unhappy results, for untold ages has not yet given rise to much practical concern. Here effects are less directly traceable to causes, and, blinded by a mass of preconceived ideas regarding the *proper* manipulation of the psychic engine—society—the collective man endeavours to realise them, though all the psychic engines in Christendom go to pieces meanwhile.

But, haply, a new era in social engine-driving is at hand. Shall I tell you the great sign of its approach? There is a "handwriting on the wall," a wall far vaster than that of the

famous Nebuchadnezzar, bearing characters of a strikingly similar purport. And this is the writing that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN, which he who runs may read to-day. In the present case it is the pariahs of the nations who are writing it, and woe betide the modern world if it is not rightly interpreted.

Hitherto *might* has been deemed *right*, and they who "by hook or by crook" (usually by crook) have gained the sunny, upper rungs of the great social ladder have taken their good-fortune as a matter of course—a token of *superiority;* regarding the human "herd" below them as so much useful material to be worked up, or as so much useless trash to be indifferently disposed of. I say "hitherto." Alas! such is *still* the case over a very large portion of our globe. With the exception of those few nations where frequent agitations of "advanced" thought have created a new psychic atmosphere, we are still offered the pitiable spectacle of the crouching masses.

The picture thus presented is really enough to discourage the belief that human society is ever to get beyond its unsightly embryonic stage. When one contemplates the vastness of the work to be done to render these social units fairly decent—to get into their stolid

minds the glimmer of a sentiment of human dignity—it is calculated to fill a lover of one's race with despair. In many countries this ignorance, and consequent degradation, is so ingrained that the work of regeneration would seem to present difficulties insurmountable.

Such, however, are not for our immediate consideration. The present problem—the one signalised by the handwriting above alluded to—is much nearer home. It is the rapidly increasing insecurity of life and property in all civilised nations which actually confronts us. Not that the crime which is spreading dismay to our hearthstones is particularly new. It would be hard, after so many centuries of subversive invention, to discover much originality in that line. But there is a feature connected with its actual manifestation which *is* new, and that is its *obtrusiveness*. Crime of old stalked like a "culprit" in the shades of night, stealthily, secretly as became it—manifestly ashamed of its *rôle* and desirous of concealment. To-day, on the contrary, crime has invested itself with a new personality. It is seizing upon modern ideals as its apologetic *raison d'être*. Impelled by a sentiment of revenge for society's admitted injustices, the social pariah is growing more and more bold in his self-constituted *rôle* of society's Nemesis.

What, statesmen, is to be the solution of this most disquieting problem? Do you think to meet it with the prison and the scaffold? Do you propose to continue the festering conditions which turn out yearly this swarm of recruits to the great army of vice—an army gaining yearly in *moral* strength (and it is the "moral" strength, as we know, which constitutes the *real* power in every rank)? "Advanced" ideas have done their disintegrating work: the social pariah is no longer the patient, defenceless victim of conditions which he had no part in creating, and which you yourselves have taught him are unbearable. So long as a brutalising social policy can maintain itself sufficiently to hold the seething masses in subjection, so long as poverty of means conspires with poverty of mind to render them as sheep in the hands of the shearer, just so long could the old policy hope to stand—and does stand, as we know, in many lands still, although it must be evident to the penetrating eye that a disrupting spirit is abroad generally. Ludovic Naudeau, in writing of social Japan, says: "Despite every precaution taken by the Government, European ideas are being infiltered among the popular masses, and are slowly undermining antique

beliefs. An icy stream is percolating down upon the invisible embers where the spirit of old Japan still strives to keep up its glow. Reason is an acid which is eating into the effigy of the gods."

"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," saith the Bible, and the actual state of our globe looks somewhat that way. From India, around the world, back to sleepy China, the modern idea of manhood is making its slow, but certain, way.

How, we repeat, is this disrupting spirit to be met effectively?

That the days of the old *régime* are numbered will not long be a disputable question. And when we consider the daily records of crime served up in the daily press; when we acknowledge the fact that life is respected no longer in any sphere—that over the head that wears the crown, not less than over that of the humble subject, hangs the Damocles sword of danger which an unsuspected caprice may precipitate at any moment—is it not time to put such a question in all seriousness? Again, then, how is the situation to be met?

The only effective way to meet any situation is first to understand it. Situations—social situations—have already too long been taken

for granted. Hence the complacency with which society looks upon its anomalies, and then wonders at their fatal consequences.

Suppose we remove a little of the conventional varnish with which civilised society is wont to cover up the coarseness of the grain and the glaring constructive defects in its organism—which has been here likened to a steam-engine. Looked at abstractly, stripped of all personal *parti-pris*, what judgment would the discriminating mind pronounce as it passed from institution to institution in civilisation with critical intent? From our incoherent, illogical law-courts, where public opinion often defeats the provisions of an effete code, thus demonstrating the fact that we have outgrown the barbarous page, to our Holy of Holies, the sanctuary of our highest aspirations, together with all the intermediate features which take their tone from these two pivotal extremes—these two indisputable monitors of our temporal and spiritual welfare—what, it may be asked, are the wholesome deductions to be drawn from all these? Does any single one of them fulfil its legitimate purpose?

Yes? Why, then, the existence of these very conditions we deplore?

"Inseparable from depraved human nature,"

you claim. Do you urge that "in law every possible provision is made to protect Society against her enemies, while the efforts of the Church are untiring for the reclaiming of these same?"

Is that your answer? And have you reflected profoundly on the subject? If so, did it never occur to you to wonder how such "enemies" originated? Should this still be a subject of wonder to you, venture into the precincts of what is called the "slums" of any Christian city. Go into the so-called "homes" of the inhabitants thereof and take in the picture—if you can.

"But," you protest, "missionaries are perpetually at work in those quarters; all the Churches are represented there, and 'charity' is unbounded. We are continually giving aid to the poor."

Giving aid to the poor! Do you really feel that your duty is thus accomplished in those quarters? Has a community fulfilled its duty towards this swarming mass—this throng of "great unwashed"—when it has distributed *less than a tithe* of what is required in a material sense, with the spiritual balm of possible *future* glories conditioned upon a *belief* in a "Christ crucified"? Is that all that

modern justice calls for? Such manifestly *is* the prevailing sentiment. And, consequently, we confront its terrible refutation in the gaunt spectre of society's "enemies."

Under present conditions society might be likened to a dwelling whose lower story and cellar are filled with loathsome disease. The happy upper storeys try to ignore the unwholesome facts below them, or to mitigate them by an occasional remedy, by a professional visit from time to time, and by big doses of disinfectant (the police). Still the disease goes on, still mortality rages. But so long as the trouble is confined to its "legitimate" quarter, it does not much matter. It is finally spreading, however; the upper storeys are attacked, life is at last in danger throughout the entire building. The usual prophylactics ("disinfectants") are now of little avail. How much longer can the dire contagion be allowed to flourish?

We talk of "race suicide"; it has become a sort of international cry. And yet, so little do we truly appreciate the race, that we sacrifice it ruthlessly, not in units—one by one—but in battalions; and then our statesmen have the impertinence to preach to women about motherhood. Question *yourselves,* heads of nations, men in municipal authority. What are

you doing, what have you ever done, for the children, the helpless, defenceless citizens you invoke thus lightly in your fear of race suicide? Think you that your duty to the public waif is done when you allow him to breathe the air of heaven untaxed? (And the Lord only knows how little of heaven there is in the air with which such infant lungs first make acquaintance!) Think you to have discharged worthily your function of public administrators while you knowingly permit this helpless waif to wallow in the gutter of his pestilential quarter —absorbing crime, and that, often, with his very mother's milk? Is this your conception, gentlemen, of the true humanitarian policy? Are you not sufficiently developed to realise that every career lost, broken, is a reproach to society?

Instead of condemning the "criminal" you should condemn yourselves. And you stand condemned in the eyes of a nobler posterity.*

* The most profoundly significant and far-reaching Bill ever introduced in the American Congress was that of Senator Crane, in 1906, which is reported as follows:

"WASHINGTON, *January 27th.*

"Senator Crane's Bill for the establishment of a Government bureau to investigate all facts that have a bearing on the health, efficiency, character, and training of children has awakened lively interest here. . . . The proposition is, in effect, a movement for

It is growing more and more monstrous to leave the poor young of the world abandoned as they are to the accidents of their vicious environment—left to the caprice of the "home," that hotbed of commonplace, brutality, ignorance, perversion in all its degrees, and to spiritual death in ninety-nine-hundredths of cases. Is it not astonishing that society remains so blind to its own interests—that it does not see that every child neglected, perverted is a criminal in the bud? And God knows the "buds" of this sort that are festering at the social bottom of every nation to-day,

the Government oversight of American babies with the object of making laws for their bringing up."

However, it was not reserved for America to take the lead in so vital a matter. It is to that sister nation, the *avant-guard* in progressive ideas, that is due the credit of the initial move for the care of the helpless children—and that over a century ago. It was Lepelletier de Saint-Fargeau (assassinated by mistake for "Philippe Égalité" for his vote *à mort* at the trial of Louis XVI.) who proposed that the poor children of the nation, from the age of five to twelve, should be brought up with the children of the rich at the expense of the nation and under family supervision (the first idea of the public school in France).

The scheme of Lepelletier, says the historian, was inspired by the noblest and most generous motives, "*but his proposal was one that interfered with family rights, as was shown very clearly by the Evêque Grégoire*, who opposed the Bill for *Le Pensionnat National* on that ground." And thus was disposed of, one of those many humanitarian ideas born of the French Revolution, struck like sparks from the great anvil upon which an agonising nation was engaged in moulding a new era.

furnishing yearly recruits to that vast army of desperadoes who have nothing to lose in a world that recks not of them!

Oh the cry of the children, the pitiful cry of the children—the children whose toddling feet "take hold on hell" almost at the first step; infant souls that are slain in the inhuman greed for gold, and that, too, among the most advanced peoples of the earth! Are we not justified in seeking some excuse for such a state of things? Should we not be only too glad to be told that such civilisations are in but the embryonic stage of collective destiny?

How long before we shall comprehend that it is easier to have good citizens than bad ones—inasmuch as it is easier to operate with Nature than against her? Bad citizens are as unmistakable a sign of unwholesome public policy as is epidemic disease a sign of unwholesome sanitary policy. *We make our citizens.* Is it not a national disgrace to make them badly? "I pray you," exclaims Sir Thomas More, "what other thing do you than make thieves and then punish them?"

Volumes might be written and spoken on this subject, and have been—not to mention the prophetic voices of the far-seeing, the intuitional perceptions of Cosmic mathematics

applied to society, which are the gems of our classic literature. But, alas! *until the Collective Soul is ripe for higher conceptions, no radical effect can be produced on higher plains though one "rose from the dead" to testify to the need thereof.* And herein lies the secret of actual conditions.

However, this *ripening* work in the hands of our modern society seems at last to be advancing with feverish rapidity. Like the accelerated velocity of a falling stone, progress moves faster and faster with the march of the centuries. And this twentieth century, of which so much is predicted—what may it not hold for us in the line of surprises! Its initial distinction, "the conquest of the air," is certainly a happy augury. Who would have dreamed fifty years ago that the twentieth century would so far eclipse in originality all that has gone before as to call an International Congress to fix an international code for the regulation of *aerial navigation!* We do not yet dream to what this crowning achievement of human genius is to lead—nor of its ultimate results morally.

When we begin to soar physically, perhaps we shall begin to aspire mentally. As yet that has not been possible. We are still the

"chosen people," naïvely questioning whether other globes can be inhabited, and if so, what kind of uncouth, ill-shaped creatures such inhabitants can be. That is about where we stand at present in our Cosmic conceptions. With some rare and conspicuous exceptions, few human minds have really risen above the immediate confines and interests of this mundane sphere.

The time has surely come, then, when it behoves humanity to take stock of its psychic bearings if it would keep pace with the gigantic strides of the physical world. Physically, practically, every nerve is stretched to meet the exigencies of the hour. Is it possible to do less morally and still show ourselves worthy our age?

There is no denying that through all the moral mist and confusion of present "transitional" conditions the collective tendency upward is discernible, however devoid of intelligent consciousness. There exists not yet any synthetic appreciation of the great intuitional revolution going on in the moral world; but it is going on just the same—instinctively, blindly, *surely*. We see it in the indifference already noted to time-honoured rites, in neglected conventions, in the constant

and flagrant violation of established institutions, and in the "devil-may-care" spirit regarding all traditional restraints of social life. Not that this state is at all praiseworthy, but that it is an unmistakable sign of the evolution taking place.

The "moralist," naturally, interprets these many signs of the times unfavourably. "Unmistakable proof of degeneracy," he says. Not so! we answer. They but indicate the unfitness of actual human institutions to actual human needs. That is all. The collective child has outgrown its primitive conceptions of things. Its old habiliments choke it to-day; and in its desperate, instinctive efforts to get relief it spreads confusion and dismay.

In short, it is no longer easy to disguise the fact that "civilised" man, on his great evolutionary journey, has once more reached a cross-road. He must leave the beaten track and start afresh. Will it be to prepare for the simple-organic stage—the next in the order of his social development? That must depend upon the degree of collective intellectual insight at command. Have we had enough of hard, practical experience with the forces of physical Nature to begin to recognise the *universality* of her principles of operation, and

of the necessity of applying them for the solution of that most subtle of human problems—social organisation?

It remains to be seen.

The simple-organic stage, as has been shown, is the one in which—according to its nature—the constituted organism is developed, trained, educated, disciplined, or embellished, and put in order. Now, in the case of society, it is evident that its proper constitution must depend upon a knowledge of the modes of action of the psychic forces operating therein. These psychic forces, which are called passions, are *positive* and *mathematic* in their modes of action. They consequently require an external medium, or body, as nicely adjusted and perfectly adapted to their nature as does the steam to which they have been compared. If the steam-engine is imperfect, the chances are that there will be trouble, if not fatal accident. The phenomenon of electricity affords a similar analogy: and the myriad fatal experiences of Humanity in this field are sufficiently recent to give a realising sense of the danger of ignorance in dealing with physical nature.

Now, with all these manifold experiences in the realm of the tangible, and our constantly

growing familiarity with the *uncompromising* character of Nature's laws, can it be asking too much to ask that we begin at last to suspect that there may be something legitimate in the "irregularities" or explosions of *human* nature, and to persuade ourselves that it is worth while taking such into account from a rational standpoint?

Instead of trying to conform to the dead page, thus condemning the living, palpitating reality; instead of maintaining the arbitrary social coat, into which it has been insisted that man should fit—may we not finally reach the conviction that the coat might better be fitted to man? Once imbued with this conviction, men will begin the study of psychology in a serious manner. The dilletantism that has hitherto passed by that name counts for nothing. It has not advanced mankind one iota in positive knowledge on the subject. On the contrary, observing society's moral deviations—discords, crimes, failures—our so-called psychologists have essayed to build systems thereon: spinning out volumes on "criminality," degeneracy and the like; which is about as logical as it would be to observe the sizzling of human flesh in contact with a "live" wire, and then proceed to philosophise on the

destructive nature of live wire. Of course it is destructive—as is also the live passion, when wrongly directed or forced by abnormal conditions from its *ordained,* beneficent *rôle* into a moral "short circuit." "It would be more interesting," says one of our purest and most advanced writers, "for the moralist to foresee in what manner man will conduct himself in truth—that is, in his natural element—than to examine into the manner in which he comports himself in error."

This is, indeed, the one point of real interest in the problem. What, we may well ask, is to be man's harmonic, normal conduct in our truly scientifically organised societies? The really interesting questions are not whether or not genius is born of insanity; whether or not the man or the woman furnishes the greater number of criminals; whether or not crime should be traced to "heredity"—discussions which are but pointless, idle ratiocination in the eternally "vicious circle." Nor is it important to determine whether or not the Pope is "infallible," nor yet whether this creed or that contains the most of "Divine truth." All such puerile questionings are distracting to the simple mind, and they are destined sooner or later to find their

definite answer in the development of the Collective Intelligence.

Is it not strange that mankind can still consent to waste time in such contentions—beating about "men of straw," of no imaginable consequence—while so many vital questions are waiting to be answered for the welfare of the race?

CHAPTER II

NATURE *VERSUS* MAN

"*For these things tend still upward—progress is*
The law of life—man's self is not yet Man!
Nor shall I deem his object served, his end
Attained, his genuine strength put fairly forth,
While only here and there a star dispels
The darkness; here and there a towering mind
O'erlooks its prostrate fellows; when the host
Is out at once to the despair of night,
When all mankind alike is perfected,
Equal in full-blown powers—then, not till then
I say, begins man's general infancy."

—BROWNING.

"*Not one step has man taken toward the solution of the problem of his destiny. In one condemnation of folly stands the whole universe of men.*"

—EMERSON.

My readers are possibly expecting a description of that simple-organic stage—the next evolutionary phase said to be awaiting civilisation.

An effort of the imagination in such direction would not be difficult. But would it avail?

Many have been the efforts of idealists to depict a social future—from Plato to modern times, notably at the beginning of the last

century, when what is called "socialism" was born, though not yet baptized—that is, named. In the enthusiasm of that great uplifting movement of the old world all Christendom was touched. Still, despite the logic of the scheme of social organisation then presented, and its profound underlying principles—sure to be recognised when the time comes—that scheme could not transcend certain *insurmountable* epoch-limitations. Which is to say, that, although there was then agitated the most advanced thought of its kind ever evolved by Humanity, it was necessarily stamped with the characteristics of its day—both in science and sentiment. Therefore it must be admitted that the social future projected a hundred years ago will never be realised exactly as it was then conceived.

Every purely personal conception is necessarily stamped with the characteristics of its own peculiar age. To whatever degree a man may be able to transcend his epoch in some special direction, his conceptions—so far as tinged with his own personality—must be on a level with the general spirit of his time. He who is ambitious of immortality must link his name by *discovery* with Cosmic law—which, alone, is of all time.

It would follow, from such argument, that any attempt at a detailed presentation of the social world which *is to be* would be vain—worse than vain; for such a picture, however ideal, would have to take its colours from the artist's actual pallet, and would—in just so much—be limiting: a wordy boundary. Whereas our future is BOUNDLESS, as far as actual intellectual reach is concerned. And in entering upon a new era, our chief pre-occupation should be, not the *ideal future*, but the WORTHY PRESENT, which alone can lead to that future. The great work of the present is to try to discover the TRUE, legitimate modes of action of the psychic forces. And the first step in this direction will necessarily be the modelling of our collective economics—government, public control, direction—upon those of Nature, with which we are at present in flat contradiction. It must be recognised that Nature never says, "Thou shalt" or "Thou shalt not." When she wants anything done, she quietly proceeds to play upon those psychic or sensual cords calculated to bring about a spontaneous compliance with her designs. Observe her, if you please, in her entire human direction. Mark how ingeniously she utilises the passions of men for the carrying

out of her purposes. She aims at procreation, and she makes the conditions of its fulfilment irresistible; she desires the continuation of individual life, and she implants those instincts which work automatically to such end. What is that trait called "egoism" —so baleful when unbalanced—but the instinct of self-preservation, one of Nature's agents in the accomplishment of her designs? Survey the whole field of Nature's operations, and you will find everywhere manifest her admirable system of ATTRACTION, inviting imitation on the part of Humanity.

"Eyes have they, but they see not; ears have they, but they hear not."

When the full perception of these universal principles really comes, as it is bound to come sooner or later, there will be born an enthusiasm for the moral sciences as great as there now exists for the physical sciences.

Then it is that Humanity will seek, not to impose arbitrary restraint, but to comply with the laws of *normal* direction; not to impose *human* will, but to fathom *Cosmic* law.

When humanity shall have arrived at a full knowledge of the laws governing its passional or psychic nature, and shall have applied them in the proper organisation of its industrial

and social life, then will civilisation have entered upon its simple-organic stage.

It is in place here to explain that, while the social organism under consideration is in but its embryonic stage of evolutionary development (still in process of making), Humanity itself is in its simple-organic stage.

It could not be said of the collective soul that it is *unconstituted*. Such constitution was evidently an accomplished fact upon the appearance of the integral human on the globe. But it is equally evident that the work of educating, disciplining, developing, training this last and noblest work of Nature has been a gigantic operation, requiring incalculable time. How far back the work began it is yet impossible to say, but the indisputable testimony of historic man would lead one to believe the evolutionary road has been long indeed.

Up to the present, Humanity has done little more than to equilibriate itself with its material surroundings, and it can scarcely be said to have *thought* beyond such surroundings—rationally, that is. Man's dim, uncomprehended upreachings, as already shown, have invariably concerned the *hereafter;* and a "hereafter" totally stranger to, and aside

from, the visible universe with which he has been gradually making himself acquainted.

It must be clear, consequently, that the collective soul is still in its tutelary state. So far from having attained its majority, and the accomplishment of its ultimate functions—destiny—it is yet as unconscious of those functions as is the child of the functions of maturity. It is still with its dolls and its hobby-horses; it is still going to school—to the great school of Nature, whose continued revelations are a constant surprise to it, while every fresh lesson tends to puff up that sentiment of personal importance so characteristic to youth.

In reality, the collective soul has but just *learned to read,* and that not yet fluently. Sometimes it reads correctly and sometimes incorrectly, but it is, at last, *reading*—reading in Nature's great book, *and that is a big achievement.*

If, then, instead of trying to limit man's *possible* progress to the capacities of an age, we could learn to always regard the *present* as but a college-class from which we are to graduate when the proper time comes, there would be less of those miscalculations and discarded "systems" which time is continually

bringing into discredit, thus throwing discouragement upon human endeavour, and provoking that oft-repeated declaration—"Man can never know!"

Whether or no he can ever know, we are still unable to *demonstrate;* but it is none the less permissible to oppose that short-sighted, pessimistic statement, and to press onward in the path so unmistakably indicated.

Now, when we consider the situation thus presented, a simple-organic Humanity living in an embryonic social organism, are not existing social conditions fully explained and logically accounted for?

And would not such a theory, once grasped and accepted, greatly facilitate the progressive work of the future?

CHAPTER III

DUAL CHARACTER OF MAN

> "*For the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen.*"
> —St. Paul, Romans i. 20.

> "*When I turn my attention inwards upon myself, I perceive that I am a being incomplete, dependent upon another, and reaching after something higher than my present state.*"
> —Descartes.

Before passing to the consideration of the next stage, the compound-organic—that of final fruition, that in which Humanity is to fulfil its ultimate destiny—let us glance rapidly at the dual character of this human integer called man, his two distinct modes of action—the conscious-rational and the sub-conscious-intuitional.

Much has been said of these two sides of mental activity; in fact, they have furnished the basis of every philosophy that has ever existed; but they have never yet been the

subject of a complete scientific analysis, notwithstanding the perceptions of certain thinkers thereon, and fragmentary explanations regarding what by some is called "unconscious cerebration."

The terms by which we will here designate these two sides of human nature are: first, the *internal-intuitional;* second, the *external-rational.* The one is a manifestation of the innate, spontaneous forces of the soul; the other is a manifestation of conscious, calculating reason. The one is purely instinctive. It simply is because of its nature—a nature unconsciously attuned to Cosmic mathematics; while the other, dealing with finite phenomena, operates only upon given data: it is always conscious of its operations, and never operates without a rational purpose. The one *feels, conceives;* the other *realises.*

Primitively, when the intellect possessed little or no practical data, it was naturally the internal-intuitional which predominated in the social affairs of men. The human machine, like that of the brute, was primarily moved by instinct (instinct of the senses and of the sentiments), the great difference between the two being, that while the brute remains instinctual, the human gradually develops that upper

story from which he is to enlighten, interpret, and direct the first.

Now, it is these two, sometimes conflicting, psychic principles which, in their alternate struggles, have made history. All our theocracies are the work of the internal-intuitional. This great realm of unreasoning perception is the one, too, in which men dream dreams, see visions, and prophesy. And to it we owe all our phantasmagoria regarding superterrestrial existence.

Feeling the universe, and dominated by an irresistible longing for unity therewith, it was inevitable that man should strive to realise his blind aspiration as best he could; and the young, collective intellect devoid of science, possessing but little practical, experimental data, was powerless to control this fiery steed rushing wildly hither and thither in pursuit of the Divine. Consequently, all those more or less absurd theories of "the Divine" which tradition has handed down to us.

It may be objected that there was probably little tendency towards the "Divine" in primitive man—notwithstanding the traditional perfections of the Garden of Eden. Granted—in a sense. Primitive man and modern man are necessarily far apart, although—also in a

sense—the first has a certain advantage, for the simple reason that he was nearest to Nature, Nature undeveloped, but *Nature;* whereas the modern man—a result of centuries of false perverting development—is in many respects far from Nature.

It is out of this spontaneous internal-intuitional that have sprung our proverbs, which may be called international, since they repeat themselves in a Babel of tongues. "Proverbs are the sanctuary of the intuitions," says Emerson. Here also is the secret of those passages in Holy Writ which have been the charm and marvel of generations. We ponder the Bible, the Rig-Vedas, the Zend-Avesta, the Koran, all the sacred books of antiquity, in fine, and we marvel at the "TRUTHS" they contain—the eternal, ever fresh intuitions of Humanity rendered in so many different languages, in so many different forms, in different ages, by people unknown to each other, and yet in substance always the same—and as fitting to-day as they were at the hour of their earliest conception.

Not unfrequently these remarkable passages of the Bible are cited as proof of that book's "Divine origin." A Divine origin, truly, but it is the Divinity in Humanity which has been

thus recording its glorious presence through the practical martyrdom of the ages. And if we will carefully compare the various theologies of history we can but discover the striking similarity of symbolism which distinguishes them all—showing their unity of source. Consider, for instance, the simple detail of the idea of the TRINITY; it is a *universal* intuition of which we do not yet know the real meaning.

All this goes to show the extent to which universal perceptions are independent of time, place, and condition. The SOUL *sees* truth in the very infancy of the race; explains it badly often, or not at all more often, but it is wonderful how Time rediscovers and burnishes up, as it were, "truths" lost sight of in the recesses of time. "The soul is big with truth!" said Socrates. "God dwells in us!" said Euripides.

We shall never understand the Bible until we fully comprehend these two distinct sides of Humanity; and the absence of such understanding accounts for the many *varying* "commentatory" efforts which gather dust upon our library shelves—external-rational guesses, bound to miss those inner meanings which they do not suspect. No *real* Bible is open to a purely external-rational understanding.

Thus, it will be seen, it is mostly this instinctive side of Humanity which has thus far swayed the world, producing its primitive forms of government, its arts, its poets, its prophets, and its BEACON LIGHTS. Sad to be obliged to add: also its horrors of every description. For this grand psychic force has been *blind*. It has felt and conceived what, under given conditions, was its nature to feel and conceive, and when obstacles barred its way it was uncompromising—merciless!

Nevertheless, there have been many reactions, and this indomitable internal-intuitional has had many a set-back. The growing intellect—the more "level-headed" external-rational—has often revolted at its sentimental extravagances, thus giving birth to fresh ideal departures, with the introduction of new social outlooks. Then gods are dethroned, mythologies or theologies are criticised and torn to pieces; while hard reality, born of "observation and experiment," seizes the social rein. And it is the manner in which this rein is handled that determines the intellectual status of the epoch it controls. As far as men *know*, things will go smoothly, but when they begin to *assume* to know and to elaborate personal theories for which they are unable to offer any

demonstrable basis, then difficulties arise. The internal-intuitional discovers the imposture (whether able to explain it or not), and becomes in its turn dissatisfied. And, sooner or later, the psychic pendulum swings to the other extreme, and a "new religion" is born.

Thus have they alternated through the ages—these two great rival powers: the external-rational, at each fresh reaction, gaining ground through its continually growing enlightenment.

To illustrate this it is unnecessary to go farther back than to the Greek era—that era of unique mental activity whose brilliant *guesses* regarding Nature's secrets have had, many of them, to wait nearly three thousand years to be verified by an age possessing those scientific "tools, implements, and machinery" which the Greeks did not possess, and which are indispensable for the penetration of those secrets and their successful handling through LAW.

When Greek mythology had, through its extravagance, become a subject of criticism, its influence was shaken, and gradually it paled in the light of the Greek intellect. The gods were eclipsed by the more gifted philosophers, and an "age of reason" predominated until this fever of vain speculation had in turn run itself

out in extravagances of the other extreme. Nevertheless, the Greek external-rational was far ahead of its epoch; it anticipated the centuries, although *impotent* because of its *scientific* ignorance. To show what the Greek mind could have done had it possessed a knowledge of the concrete sciences, observe its achievements in mathematics. Mathematics, like music, is an intuitional science, and may be defined as the sum of all the operations which the human mind can perform on numbers—that is, on *abstract units*. Such operations are analysis, comparison, and synthesis, or distribution, co-ordination, and combination. It needed but a happy brain-organisation to enable such abstract perceptions to express themselves without extraneous aid, and that the Greeks possessed. Euclid, which has immortalised the name of its author, was produced some three centuries before Christ, and its treatment of the "Elements of Geometry" has never been surpassed.

However, as we have seen, Greek speculation could not hold. The resources of the external-rational were yet too limited. It had to go down, and, with degenerate Rome, give place to that fresh internal-intuitional impulse which ushered in the Christian era.

There have not been wanting reacting efforts on the part of the external-rational during these intervening centuries; but it was not in the logic of progress that they should prevail. The interests of the internal-intuitional were far too imperative, there was too much at stake in the line of moral discipline and development to permit the triumph of Middle-Age rationalism —even though held at bay by that terrible Inquisition. The fanatical power of the Church was the saving of Humanity during those "dark ages" when mankind had indeed to walk by faith. And, to tell the truth, until very modern times, mankind has not done much of anything else.

Now, a full understanding of these two great psychic factors—their characteristics and their respective *rôles*—would enable us to analyse and classify both men and events. To the student of psychology it would open up a vast world of perceptions, showing the evolutionary significance of races as well as of epochs, and explain the mental peculiarities of distinguished personalities. It would show that the sour, pessimistic humour of a Schopenhauer was, owing to a strong internal-intuitional nature, all out of tune with civilisation. The world to him was a hell because his ideality was

constantly crucified by its crude environment; and the desperateness of the situation was that his external-rational gave him no explanation thereof. The great trouble in his case (as in that of all our philosophers) was that the *actual* was looked upon as *final*. As he found the practical world, so he supposed it destined for ever undisturbed to remain. Hence the suffering of an over-sensitive, undisciplined nature, and the bitterness to which it gave rise.

It is peculiarly interesting, with the aid of this "key," to review the speculations of this vast brotherhood of intuitionalists, and, despite their apparent diversity, to recognise the unity of internal-intuitional perception which runs through them all. They all feel the same truths; that is, they all alike perceive the spiritual side of the universe as yet unfelt by the masses, and they strive (each in his own way) confusedly, dimly to seize upon these abstract conceptions—to reduce them to verbal shape. They get fine glimpses from time to time, and then the veil falls and they are again in darkness.

If proof were needed that not one of these speculators upon the Unknown has yet caught the *integral glimpse,* we have but to note how the march of progress leaves them all behind,

and must continue to leave them behind while they are content to elaborate *individual, personal* theories. *No philosophy can stand which is not based upon Cosmic law.*

Our key would also throw an appreciative light upon that diamond in the rough the great Carlyle and modern Jeremiah, whose constant lamentations, either over himself, or over somebody or something else, made his life and that of poor Jane a veritable agony. The internal-intuitional of his robust Scotch nature penetrated too deeply into the vanities of the practical world to be hushed by any of its current sophistries, and his weak external-rational was powerless to throw any satisfactory light on the perplexing social problems constantly presenting themselves to him. Hence the peculiar style of his intellectual productions, written with the *aquafortis* of an indomitable, dissatisfied soul.

All our really great historic characters have been great internal-intuitionalists; but few have possessed the happy balance given by a corresponding external-rational. Da Vincis are rare in history—rarely do we find the artist and the scientist combined. When we do find them, both in a superior degree, they are what may be called *compound geniuses.* The

ordinary genius is formed by an unusual development of some one talent—that is, a predominance of intuitional power in a single direction, and that *most often at the expense of the ensemble*. This is why "geniuses" are so often called eccentric, or unflatteringly classed with the insane. This onesidedness also accounts for the fact that the great virtuoso is seldom a great composer.

Although an extended development of this fascinating subject does not enter into the plan of the present work, it may not be amiss to illustrate still further the point we have been endeavouring to make clear.

Every reader is familiar with the peculiarities of John Ruskin, one of the most remarkable personalities of the last century, and whose influence on his generation has, happily, been immense. Ruskin was an uncompromising intuitionalist—an artist in the highest sense of the word; so exclusively so, in fact, that as an external-rational realiser he never distinguished himself. The justice of his artistic sentiment was certainly unquestionable; still, had he been able to control the practical world, he would have carried it back to barbarism, so great was his revulsion at the crude, material facts of civilisation. The railroad was his

nightmare. Such characters are inestimable for the inspiration of mankind, but their very superiority would tend to defeat progress They cannot take into account the imperfections inseparable from all transitional and experimental effort. In Ruskin's case the result was that many of his finest literary productions lacked evolutionary value.

Who does not recall with pleasure those fascinating pages in his "Stones of Venice" in which he laments the decline of the Middle-Age spirit as manifested in its art? "The corruption of all architecture," he writes, "especially ecclesiastical, corresponded with and marked the state of religion all over Europe—the peculiar degradation of the Romanist superstition and of public morality in consequence, which brought on the Reformation." His vivid description of this transition from the Middle-Age to the Renaissance is full of beautiful reflections; but there was a failure on his part to perceive the profound meaning of it all. It is very true that this religious, and consequent artistic, degeneracy was crying and reprehensible from a narrow, temporary standpoint. Yet it was *inevitable* in progress. The age of faith—that is, of the internal-intuitional—which marked the Gothic architecture, while

beautiful, "inspired," Divine for its time—for all time, in fact, as an expression of the God in man—was really *but a phase* in human development. Had it been otherwise, had it involved the principle of eternity in the sense of *stability,* men must have remained, *external-rationally,* the children they then were. That beautiful efflorescence of the internal-intuitional in the Middle Ages but shadowed forth the richness of a spiritual nature as yet unconscious of its great possibilities. It rendered itself no *rational* account of what it was doing. It simply expressed itself in the peculiarly favourable *milieu* in which it found itself. Its art had been a dream, a revelry of the soul in the unhampered realm of the imagination. But, as we have said, it knew not its own *raison d'être.* It was blind, uncritical—the lovely promise of collective infancy, doomed to die for want of proper sustaining conditions. Once arrived at its possible apex as an epoch, it was forced to give way to a fresh collective impulse, to grow dim, and gradually fade out in the positive practical light of the newly advancing external-rational spirit. This new spirit, whose elements were logic, mathematics, cold, practical calculation, set about to improve things

generally ; and poetry was the least of its preoccupations. It was the beginning of that hard, realistic age in which we still are, and which is indispensable to integral progress.

One of the most common mistakes of critics and of historians has been, as has been remarked, this generally prevailing disposition to treat phases of social evolution (of which all history is but a succession) as possible *finalities*. "But for so and so, certain admirable spiritual manifestations would have lasted!" they are wont to exclaim. Whereas nothing in human experience has yet been worthy to last, and every phase in the evolutionary march, thus far, has come but to go. These separate phases might be likened to a pleasing landscape which the traveller leaves behind him. He may look back on them with delight, but were he to tarry by the way he would never reach his journey's end.

It is scarcely necessary to attempt here to present illustrations of individual external-rationalists: they are, in fact, so much of an *actuality* to-day that one need but to observe closely to class them correctly. It is the external-rationalist who says, "There is no God," who attempts to account for the universe by the interaction of blind forces, who would

like to evolve man out of the monkey—and is still diligently seeking the "connecting link"—thus showing how wide of the Cosmic mark still are our "scientists." They have never seen a *single* object in human creation that was not the expression of a *thought,* even to so insignificant a thing as a toothpick, and yet, in their external-rational wisdom, they would deprive the universe of design—*thought.*

Samuel Butler, in his "Evolution, Old and New," writes: "The unfortunate failure to see that evolution involves design and purpose as necessarily, and far more intelligibly than the theological view of creation has retarded our perception of many important facts for three-quarters of a century."

It is the external-rationalist who can write the following: "Thus, the cult of the dead, which is the earliest origin of all religion in the sense of worship, is also the last relic of the religious spirit which survives the decay of faith due to modern scepticism. . . . To this cause I refer on the whole the spiritualistic utterances of so many of our leaders of modern science. They have rejected religion, but they cannot reject the inherited and ingrained religious emotions."

What loose reasoning! And this man

thought himself a "scientist"! The "they" of whom he speaks have *not* rejected religion. They have rejected *theology*—the theology of Christianity—and they have not yet sufficient external-rational light to discern the new and higher theology. Religion man will never discard: it is his divine seal.

This is a specimen of some of the mental operations which have passed under the name of "science," and are still able thus to pass because the collective external-rational is still very undeveloped on all abstract questions. It possesses, yet, no powers of abstract criticism. But when we reflect that science—that is, demonstrated law—dates back only a few centuries, is it surprising if such be the case? The rational side of man, unlike his internal-intuitional, has had to *labour* to achieve. Nothing comes to it by divination, and we know by individual experience how slow achievement often is. If the individual may spend a lifetime in the solution of a problem that will escape him at last, think how much slower it must be for the race which has so immeasurably more, and more difficult work, to accomplish. If it has required decades of centuries to arrive at a fair degree of discrimination between what is known as

"revealed" truths and scientific truths, we must not be too severe on the modern "rationalist." *All this is a matter of growth.* Men grow into knowledge, and there is no short cut to science. The ordinary "scientists" of to-day, it might be said, are scientific *mechanics*. And you will not fail to note that they operate solely on *material* facts. A fact to them is a fact, and they hasten to build theories thereon, theories which, in many cases, the coming generations are bound to unbuild. Why? Because scientists stand as yet but upon the threshold of SCIENCE. The grand synthesis, which would enable them to grasp the idea of Cosmic UNITY, and to work in harmony therewith, is still wanting. Like the old-time "specialist" in medicine, who ignorantly applied his remedy exclusively to the spot where the organic disturbance manifested itself, they study the universe in spots, details, gaining but fragmentary knowledge. They think they are doing a big work. *And they are.* They are doing just the best they can.

Each of these two motive factors, the internal-intuitional and the external-rational, are urging Humanity onward—each in its peculiar sphere ; the internal-intuitional on the one side, clamouring for worthy expression,

and the external-rational on the other, endeavouring to reduce the problem to its mathematical equation—to a final elucidation of the mysteries of ultimate destiny.

Many an external-rationalist would incline to dispute this last, disclaiming any interest in "destiny." But does not the Good Book tell us that "God maketh the wrath of man to praise Him"? It is not what we *want* to do, but what we *do* do, that counts. And we may be sure that the individual contributes as unmistakably toward the great collective work as does the little individual coral-builder to those submarine reefs of whose dangers or uses he knows nothing. Cosmic design is too wisely directed to admit of the escape of a single artisan requisite to its fulfilment.

> "There is a Divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them as we may."

We do not need to be told that these two great contrasting principles find themselves as definitely represented in sex as elsewhere. The dominating internal-intuitional of woman is proverbial, and has won for her a certain recognition of superiority over the slower and more painstaking brother where spontaneous insight had its advantages. And how beauti-

fully do we see in woman's historic position one of those marvellous calculations of Nature which we are often slow to understand. It is upon woman, the great internal-intuitional artist, that has depended the conservation of the race. Therefore the importance of safeguarding, through her, those psychic qualities which count for its upward growth ; and cruel as social conditions have been for her thus far, they have been inevitable in evolutionary economy. Had she been permitted to take an external-rational, active part in the crude battle of life, the generations would have been compromised.

It has been her very nullity in any external-rational sense during the hard, brutal ages of the past which had made her the palladium of the collective soul. Her great, legitimate *rôle* required no reflection, and the very passivity of the instrument (so intelligently provided for by cosmic economy) left Nature free in the building up of the new organism. Untrammelled by the direct workings of a crude external-rational, Nature was able to produce her best under circumstances more or less happy, during the ups and downs of a plodding humanity. Conditions would have been far otherwise had both sexes mingled on those

lower external-rational planes which have distinguished all primitive history.

It is the play of the internal-intuitional, it may be observed, which lends beauty of form and grace of character. It is to this factor that we look for that flexible, psychic spontaneity which is an enduring charm. Let us consider, then, the single item of physical beauty, and note the extent to which it is affected by the predominance of one or the other of these two factors.

Every nation exhibits a peculiarity in this respect. It will be found that where woman has remained the most childlike—that is, where she has retained the most of the simplicity of Nature—other things being equal, her work has been the most harmonious in a physical sense. The Arab woman, to take an extreme illustration, is an external-rational nonentity. All Arab children are cherubs. True, this is scarcely the race to which one would look for the ideal to-day, but it is none the less interesting to note this physical detail among a people so generally degenerate. A few years of practical existence suffice, of course, to obliterate the first blush of fresh Nature, but the universal charm of the Arab babe, as seen in the French colony, is a lesson to contemplate.

Observe, now, the same physical detail in the motherland, that most external-rational of modern nations. Here, it will be remarked, physical *beauty* is seldom an important question. So rare is it, indeed, as to become among these people almost a negligible quantity. They have a substitute far preferable, in a sense, since it is independent of Nature, and at instant command. And that is ART. It is the artistic *caché* of the French woman-of-the-world that gives her *her* distinction—enabling her often to throw into the shade simple plastic harmony. And herein (parenthetically) is an explanation of the secret of fashion's headquarters. This is why the French capital is the Mecca of *la mode*, which may be said to be purely external-rational; consequently a product of the intellect, belonging legitimately to the great modern centre of artificial life.

Now, as above remarked, among all modern nations France is the most external-rational. It is not our purpose here to enlarge on this point, but it is instructive to remark, by way of illustration, how the association of the sexes in commerce has physically affected the race. The mothers of the nation are, as a rule, strong external-rationalists, be their scene of action

in the counting-room or at the family hearthstone, where woman is usually the inflexible, mathematical dispenser of order and comfort. In the French household, be it but that of a peasant, there will usually be found those distinguishing national qualities of order and economy which are the result of generations of external-rational calculation.

These remarks are not made by way of critical reflection. On the contrary, the *rôle* of the French woman has been most resultful in a national way. It has been a practical argument in behalf of the capacity of the sex, and although leading by no means to an ideal *rôle* as yet, it may be taken as a promise of things to be. But here is not the place to pursue reflections on this most modern and most interesting question of woman's legitimate place in the world. What has been said is simply for the purpose of calling attention to the conservative significance of woman's historic passivity, and her effaced social position hitherto; showing, meanwhile, how unconsciously and well she has borne her part in the long upward struggle of mankind.

But it is not alone in her women that France gives evidence of her signal rank among modern nations. If we consider her *rôle* as

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leader in modern art, it will be seen how all nations look to the great French capital for initiative instruction and suggestion in this field, which has become almost purely external-rational. It is *technique* that is the general ambition to-day, with startling effects called "naturalism," and *tours de force* showing artistic ingenuity. Never has technique been so pushed to the front in aim and achievement. And although we may fail to admire the subject of the artist or its handling, it is impossible, often, to remain indifferent to merits of execution.

Were it important to pursue the subject into other fields, illustrations might still be offered of this predominance of the external-rational in France—hence that nation's conspicuous *rôle* in every department of modern intellectual activity. But the fact is touched upon here simply as illustrative of an extremely interesting point, the recognition of which would greatly facilitate an understanding of evolutionary tendencies in general.

It would develop the fact that it is not so much the character of an individual or of a nation *per se*, as it is a more or less consonance with the spirit of the age, which determines the success or failure of those

moving in it. It needs but a cursory glance at the nations of the earth to justify this remark, and to show, likewise, how those nations, awakening to an appreciation of such fact, are making haste to fall into rhythm with the great external-rational army.

The very vastness of this subject prevents its adequate handling here. The foregoing is at most a suggestion of its all-embracing character, but it is sufficient for those of my readers who may be interested to follow up the study independently. Into whatever realm they please to penetrate with this key, they are sure to unlock psychic treasures, for it fits everywhere in the nature of mankind.

Apply it, for instance, to races. They, too, are to be classed according to the predominance of one or the other of the two factors in question. Of the two great historic races—the Semitic and the Aryan—the one is internal-intuitional and the other external-rational. The remarkable advantage and beauty of the Greek civilisation was its phenomenal combination of both. It is the Aryan to-day, who, in the collective race of life, seems to prevail. And his leading characteristics abundantly explain why.

It is in race history that is shown up most

strikingly the far-reaching effects of these two contrasting factors. Woe be to the race who tarries in the realm of the internal-intuitional to-day! The spirit of the age, as we have endeavoured to show, forbids it, and national experience shows its unhappy results. Not that this realm is any less fitted to collective than to individual expression, but simply because its plane is yet too low to permit of its being a worthy national guide. It is yet too unenlightened to be a wise leader, or even to hold its own in the world's great modern struggle for existence. Reference has already been made to the pitiable examples of such national helplessness offered in India and among other Asiatic peoples, where centuries of unprogressive religious beliefs have stunted the external-rational—developed a contempt for it, in fact. Therefore the fate of the millions overridden and exploited by those practically sharpened-up external-rational nations, of which England is a worthy representative.

And yet there exist modern Aryans who, not knowing what to make of the actual impotence of their own religious world, turn—in their embarrassment—to the effete East, hoping, in the hallucinations of the learned Parsee, to find a "saving grace."

How long before men will *know* that evolution never operates backward—that in the abstract, as in the concrete, ONWARD is the universal maxim?

True, the study of those Eastern theologies and forms of worship is profoundly interesting and instructive. If we would give ourselves the pains to examine into them thoroughly, tracing them back to their primitive source, we should probably be astonished at the indisputable evidence to be found there of our own theological origin.*

But to return at this late day to the early conceptions of an antique race, which, how-

* The late Abbe Huc, a French missionary, who wrote an account of his observations in Thibet in the middle of the last century, pointed out most naïvely the similarity which he was surprised to find existing between the Buddhist and the Roman Catholic ceremonials. And even more greatly to his surprise he found his delightful "Travels in Thibet" placed on the Index. In his remarks on the Buddhist ceremonials he writes: "One cannot help but be struck with its marked resemblance to Catholicism. The cross, the mitre, the dalmatic, the chape or pluvial that the grand Lamas wear in travelling or when they perform some ceremony outside of the Temple; the service, with its double choir; the psalmody, the exorcisms, the censer held by five chains, and opening and closing at will; the benediction given by the Lamas in extending the right hand over the heads of the faithful; the chaplet, ecclesiastical celibacy, religious retreats, the worship of the saints, fastings, processions, litanies, holy water—here are the many features of correspondence between the Buddhists and ourselves." He might, says Max Müller, have added: "the tonsure, relics, and the confessional."

ever poetic, however thickly strewn with spiritual pearls, are none the less inadequate to modern wants, is, to say the least, a proof giving of a remarkable degree of short-sightedness. Can it be imagined that the mentally triturated Aryan could ever absorb his active personality in a dream of Nirvâna? Or should we aspire to make of religion a kind of exotic spiritual flower on the bosom of a modern external-rationalism intensified?

The placid, contemplative spirit of the antique East has no legitimate place in the modern West. We might profit by the modesty displayed in the learned East and by the sincerity of its spiritual convictions, but its philosophies will be found powerless to relieve the embarrassments of a modern civilisation.

Finally, if we follow up this presentation of the two distinct sides of human nature, with its legitimate application to our own age and society, what do we find? We find a bewildered internal-intuitional, conscious that it is being wronged in some way, but powerless to analyse the situation; while confronting it we find an external-rational quite as impotent in its way, although much better satisfied with itself, and greatly disposed to arrogate to itself the palm of superiority. It taunts

the internal-intuitional with sentimentality, and superstition, never suspecting that superstition is possibly not a monopoly on the part of its psychic sister.

Nevertheless, it is this hard, unsentimental external-rational which must necessarily continue to prevail for a long while longer. The field of labour in which it is engaged is immeasurable, from actual standpoints, so much is there to be accomplished in the making of those conditions indispensable to a higher type of spirituality ("Man must make the social house for God to dwell in"). Meanwhile, the internal-intuitional stands aloof, the aggrieved victim of external-rational aggression. It struggles ignorantly to resist that scientific tide which cannot be resisted, and which it does not understand, although destined, sooner or later, to be carried triumphantly onward upon its more enlightened bosom.

We imagine ourselves already greatly advanced—and we are, comparatively. We think we know a great deal—and we do know *something*. But we are still not unlike the youth who starts out in life imagining himself an intellectual prodigy. It is only with years and experience that he learns to fathom his

ignorance. The more we know the more we realise that we don't know much. Socrates esteemed himself very far advanced when he had discovered that he knew "nothing." Such is the frame of mind that would profit the collective man. Therein would consist the beginning of his WISDOM.

The great, modest Newton, in referring to his grand discovery a short time before his death, said, "I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me."

Much of this will probably be regarded as rather a discouraging view of things. "If after such ages of study and research, with all the intellectual wealth we think ourselves possessed of, we still know nothing, what is the use of trying? As well give it up!"

Not at all! Since our position is recognised to be one of relativity, a review of the past must be full of encouragement. It is only in view of the future that the subject may involve misgivings, and their basis will be found less real than imaginary. The hardest

part of it all will be the discovery of the laws of a true social organisation. Such undertaking is, it must be admitted, bristling with difficulties; and for the very evident reason that it must encounter antagonistic preconceived ideas. Illogical as it may seem, it is always the invisible obstacle that is the most difficult of attack. What can be observed, tangibly demonstrated, can be squarely met, but that which is built upon an abstraction, a sentiment, may defy reason.

Now, as has been already shown, it is the physical sciences which have prepared the way for, and are going to lead to, those spiritual or abstract sciences of which there is not yet much general conception. On the contrary, the popular tendency has been to keep up a barrier between the two realms—to discuss "The Conflict of Science and Religion," and to disseminate a belief in their inherent antagonism. We can pardon this on the part of theologians—we must pardon it, I suppose, on the part of all; inasmuch as the ordinary run of "scientists" themselves would hesitate to accept the proposition that law operates as unquestionably and *immutably* in the realm of the abstract as in that of the concrete. Rarely is it, indeed, that a Henry Drummond

presents himself with the courage and the insight to treat of "Natural Law in the Spiritual World." On the subject of such law he says:

"Each single law is an instrument of scientific research, simple in its adjustment, universal in its application, infallible in its results: and despite the limitations of its sphere on every side, LAW is still the largest, richest, and surest source of human knowledge. . . . Thus, as the supernatural becomes slowly natural, will also the natural become slowly supernatural, until in the impersonal authority of law men everywhere recognise the authority of God. . . . Theology at present has merely an ancient and provisional philosophic form. The old ground of faith is given up; the new science has not yet taken its place. . . . The perfection of unity is attained when there is infinite variety of phenomena, infinite complexity of relation, but great simplicity of law."

Would it were possible to present this supreme idea so that men should become *possessed* by it, and unable to think of anything else until they had achieved this pivotal work of preparation for humanity's COMING ERA. When we contemplate the capacity for

harmony of those forces which constitute the elements of society, the richness and complexity of their normal action, how is it possible to escape the conviction that the discords, perversions, vices, and crimes which have hitherto cursed society are, *must be*, attributable to a mistake of some kind, a want of law—*of science*—in this all-important realm?

And let me advance a very significant query in place just here: How is it that the world still fails to perceive the *futility* of attempting to handle so gigantic a problem in any other way but through science? How is it possible longer to be satisfied with individual or sect pretensions—empiricisms—in the work of social reform? (I say "reform" because that is the popular way of treating social regeneration.) Consider for a moment the marked distinction which has come to exist between methods employed in the operations of the moral and the physical worlds. While at one time they were on the same plane, at the mercy of individual or sect speculations, the last has finally shaken off the trammels of personal authority. Students in the concrete trust now to universal authority *alone*—to the unerring guidance of natural law, whereas the other is

still held down by tradition or individual efforts at spiritual makeshift. As new generations discover new flaws in old theologies, some specially endowed individual comes forth with a personal remedy—a direct "revelation" which promises an effectual and final solution of society's spiritual problems. What individual would dare at present to propose himself as authority on any point in physical science? The modesty of our leading scientists in that line is noteworthy. For them, to put forth a new idea is to accompany it with demonstrable proof; otherwise, the best it could hope for would be toleration as an hypothesis. Why is it, then, that in this other sphere—the abstract—a totally different state of mind persists? It is, we repeat, simply because the spiritual world is yet without *criterion*. It possesses nothing by which to test the value of a theory. In the dark we are all of the same colour: in absolute ignorance anything may pass for truth—that is to say, anything which does not shock the external-rational at the time of its presentation. It is the external-rational which condemns and destroys internal-intuitional fancies. According to the growth from age to age of this relentless critic is the disappro-

bation meted out to the vagaries of that realm in which there exists not yet any reliable interpreter. The secret of this manifest inconstancy is that reason has far outstripped intuition in the realm of logic. While the one needs but to perceive a mathematical fact to conform to it, the other lingers in the nebulæ of sentiment, persistently ignoring logic as a scientific bugbear to be avoided at any cost.

Nevertheless, it would be a great mistake to condemn indiscriminately these individual gropings towards spiritual light. While making his way toward the true religion, man must have substitutes. They are the temporary bridges between him and the Infinite; he cannot do without them; and it is interesting to observe in this sphere each successive step in advance. Each of the countless branchings off from the great orthodox tree since the Reformation has been a branch in progress—leading to "new thought," hence advanced thought.

It may not be unprofitable to consider here one of the most modern of such movements from double points of view. It is called *Christian Science*—a misnomer to begin with, since it is neither "Christian" nor "science." It would be difficult, in fact, to find anything

in human belief or practice to-day that can properly claim to be *Christian*. That title has been so variously and conflictingly applied through the centuries, it has been invoked in the interest of such a multitude of heresies, each one claiming exclusive right thereto, that any attempt to-day to assume a representative *rôle* in the name of Christ can scarcely be justified. And the less so in this particular case, since the person advancing such claim has not hesitated to place herself on the same lofty pedestal. Regarding the second term in this compound, high-sounding title, argument is scarcely necessary. The word "science" finds much modern favour, and has come to be bandied about almost as loosely as the word "Christian," but to undertake to unite the two is the acme of absurdity. Science—that is, knowledge of universal law—was not dreamed of in the time of Christ. The great prophets of antiquity rendered themselves account of nothing *intellectually*. They operated from the internal-intuitional alone; their science was but the "still, small voice," and, being much nearer to Nature than we are to-day, they felt many "truths" which generations of external-rational toilers have since striven to establish intellectually. To call a

thing a "science" proves nothing; it is, furthermore, the most fatal plank upon which a sentimentalist can elect to stand: it is the leaving of one's proper sphere to enter another, in which there is no refuge from the cold attacks of uncompromising *mind*.

Mankind may be lulled to sleep on sentiment, but science is another thing. It cuts ruthlessly into human phantasmagoria, and woe betide the unsustained, unsustainable pretensions invoked in her name!

So much for one point of view. On the other hand, whatever may have been the original motives underlying this movement, or its mistakes, it is certain that its social results have been immense for good. Mrs. Eddy has unquestionably done much toward the lifting of her generation, and *that* for the very happy reason that the philosophy of Christian Science was adapted to the wants of the great mass of minds still in the realm of *unreflecting* sentiment. It appealed to their vulnerable side, and aroused a latent spiritual strength not before suspected. It does not much matter how you get just perceptions into the human mind, provided they get there; and to convince the world that matter is, and should be, the subject of mind is a great achievement. To how many

morally weak has not this philosophy been a boon? how many imaginary ills have been put to flight under its influence! The number is incalculable, and therein lies its phenomenal secret.

That ignorance of natural law attributes to exceptional personal power these most natural effects of given causes, is really immaterial. History will place Mrs. Eddy in her true light, and history will rank her, as well, among the most potent instruments of the spiritual progress of her day. She has done more to shake the orthodox world than any other contemporary influence. That she has (consciously or unconsciously) attributed to herself *originality* in a sphere as old as the spirit of the race affects not its practical value. She, with the help of her distinguished teacher, has succeeded in putting a very old principle into a new and attractive dress for the edification of thousands in need of such; and it is in this that consists her merit. Had she named her philosophy "a perception of a profound scientific fact" it would have been more logical, but much less taking with the sentimental world.

Suppose, now, by the side of Mrs. Eddy's modern school we should set a page of, perhaps

higher, modern thought from a representative of the antique Oriental school, as presented at the "World's Congress of Religions" by Kinza Hirai, delegate from Japan. He calls it "Synthetic Religion," and begins thus:

"The primitive age of humanity was like the hypothetical epoch of nebula. No particular star of wisdom illuminated the mental universe of dim, cloudy expansion, and no special beam of love kept warm the shivering heart. But right in the heavens, above those spots where the hazy human mind's indissoluble mist crystallised into a condensed form, the brilliant suns of religion appeared, shining with resplendent lustre."

After this poetic introduction he proceeds in an effort to establish the oneness of all religions, and closes with the following beautiful peroration:

"The relation of Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Shintoism, and all the other religions of the world and their believers, is like that of many lines of railroads and their passengers. Each starts from a different point and direction, passing through different country scenes; but the final destiny is one and the same World's Fair, which will also be differently viewed by the mental situation

of the visitors. Do not dispute about the distinctions of the different lines of railroad. The World's Fair is not in the trains and cars, but it is in Chicago, right before you. You are the Fair. Stop your debate about differences of religion. Kill Gautama—he is only a conductor of the train ; burn his scripture—Truth is not in it, but right before you. You are in truth. Do not mind Christ—He is only a brakeman. Tear up the Bible—God is not in it, but right before you. You are in God.

"This synthesis of all faiths is no more a vain hope. If it were ever so thought, it is now known that this apparent dream was not Utopian, but a mirage refracted from a remote reality. Could I but have for a few moments the clairvoyant vision of the seer, and peer into the deep and subtle minds of the great men and women who are here assembled, I should discover one aim and one object common to them all—the desire and love to help and teach the others ; but I should also find a mental conception and hope in regard to this parliament as different in each mind as the faces of these members from one another. It is a dream of the Christian representatives that in assembling together these great men from China, from India, from Europe, from South America, from Japan and the Islands

of the Sea, they will for the first time behold with understanding the bloody cross of Christ, and will enroll under the banner of the humble Nazarene. And the Christian representative is right, but there is something more.

"It was the dream of the Buddhist that the clear and pure enlightenment of Gautama might be explained and comprehended by the student of the West. And the Buddhist representative is right; but there is something more.

"It was the dream of the representative from the land of the star and crescent, and all those Moslems who pray to Allah with their faces towards Mecca, that some recognition should be held out to them as a powerful and aggressive faith which has earned its place among the accepted religions of the world. And the representative of Mohammed is right; but there is something more.

"The clean Parsee, purified by fire, standing almost alone to-day under the untarnished flag of Zoroaster, still hopes and dreams of the revival of his faith by the influence of this parliament of religions. And he is right; but there is something more.

"Members of this great auxiliary assembly, there is a surprise awaiting you. The lamb and the lion shall lie down together. Looking more intently, some of us behold a strange

thing—the paradox, the anomaly—the Christian a Buddhist, and the Buddhist a Christian; the Moslem a Parsee, and the Parsee a Moslem. The grand, far-reaching result to grow out of this parliament is not what you conceive; but, as I said before, a surprise awaits you. Out of it shall come a pure being—unfettered, naked, white, with eyes like Christ and dignity like Buddha, bearing the reward of Zoroaster and the flaming sword of Moslem. To her the Jew bows his head, the Christian kneels, the Brahman prays; before her the habiliments of sects and creeds fall off, for she is pure and naked—she is the one truth resurrected from the mingled heart and interchanged mind of the world's great Parliament of Religions."

Is it indeed to the East that we must look for a real sentiment of universality in religion? Does anything with which we are familiar in Western religious literature display the breadth of conception and the largeness of heart manifested in the above citation from one of the lands to which we send missionaries? It is but just to add, moreover, that the distinguishing feature of that representative band from Oriental lands to the World's Congress of Religions was modesty, dignity of bearing, and a most generous tolerance of the opinion of others.

CHAPTER IV

NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL LAW

"Laws are formulæ which express the modes of action of forces."

"The position we are led to take up, is not that the spiritual laws are analogous to the natural laws, but that they are the same laws."—DRUMMOND.

WE have been talking of "spiritual law." Now what, one may very naturally ask, is spiritual law other than such as is taught by our theologies? Drummond claims, as we have seen, that spiritual laws are identical with natural laws—an evident truism, since to be "natural" is a primary condition of all universal law. However, a more precise definition of the laws coming under the head of spiritual, and upon the discovery of which will depends a true social organisation, we do not yet possess. Did we, the whole face of society would be changed. What we do know on general principles is that such laws are formulæ, which express the modes of action

of the psychic forces, or will be such formulæ when they shall have been discovered. Surely no one will be tempted to deny the existence of the spiritual or moral forces, since to them we owe all that we are.

The one great point to which we seek to direct attention at this moment, however, is less to an exact definition of psychic laws than it is to the fact of the absolute unconsciousness of their existence, or even the necessity of their existence, which prevails generally. It is so universally taken for granted that the "moral laws" (all that is needed to direct humanity's earthly career) are contained in the Decalogue, are perfectly understood and applied, that the spirit of the "civilised" world is still with Moses on Mount Sinai. There seems not to be a suspicion that this antique moral code, claimed to be Divine, might need revising quite as much as do our human codes based thereon —in a sense.

It is possible that the foregoing may yet be insufficient to convey an exact idea of our meaning to the mind of the reader. "You assert the existence of spiritual laws," it is perhaps objected, "and at the same time admit an inability to define them. Is not that rather

vague, considering the importance of the argument in question?"

The subject in its actual phase, it should be answered, is difficult to handle comprehensively. It would be much easier at present to describe the effects of the proper application of such laws than to give their exact formulæ. But there exist, none the less, many indications in the actual social world which, to the *real* student of *real* psychology, ought to be eloquent with meaning.

It is not, however, hypotheses that are in order just here, and it is the design of the present writing to abstain from any kind of suggestion that would tend to give a personal colouring to a presentation that is intended to be strictly impersonal. The great discovery in question, when once made, will seem very simple. It is the absence of conditions making such discovery possible which constitutes the veritable stumbling-block, namely: *tabula rasa* of all preconceived ideas and opinions concerning the psychic man. Look at him as he *is*, not as you *think* he should be. Believe that every phenomenon in psychic dynamics has its mathematical cause. If at present the forces of the soul produce discord more often than harmony there are profound reasons why.

Be assured that the passions of the soul are designed to form a psychic orchestra, fully as harmonious as, and far more complex than, our musical orchestras. If, therefore, they fail to do so at present, there must be a logical reason for such failure, and that *reason* it is the work of mankind to discover. No individual scheme is going to change social conditions. Such changes are never abrupt, and a change so great as is here implied is a work of the collectivity.

The most the individual can do is to provoke thought—compel reflection. It is "the voice of one crying in the wilderness: prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight"!

During the course of this work much reference has been made to the crookedness of those paths and its lamentable social consequences. Suppose, at the risk of wearying the reader on this point, we return to it once more in connection with the moral code above alluded to, for it is this moral code, it must be borne in mind, which is assumed to be the basis of Christian society. Now, in the practical results of all applied law, whether human or Divine, we are justified in looking for some correspondence between cause and effect. Are we

not? That is to say, we have a logical right to expect a consonance between the nature of the action of the forces at play and the laws said to underlie them. If we are operating with the force of gravitation, we are careful to adapt ourselves to its modes of manifestation which we have learned by means of the formulated law. Likewise with all of Nature's dynamics do we recognise the *imperative* necessity of operating in strict accord with law. Furthermore, in all such cases, we may be *positive in advance* of what are to be the results of said operations. How account for this? Why such security regarding the effects of what we *know* to be Cosmic law?

It is because experience has taught man the immutability, the mathematical, eternal fixedness of every principle in Nature. Once possessed, intellectually grasped, man is sure of his ground when he conforms to "natural law."

Will any one undertake to explain, then, the disastrous results following applied "Divine law"? It is not the Decalogue that is under consideration here—a simple catalogue of self-evident simplistic virtues.* It is not the literal

* It is not uninteresting in this connection to note the ten commandments of Buddha, imposed by him on his disciples.

biblical commandments that we would examine, but their presumed interpretation as applied practically, with their social results.

If conformity to *natural law* always ensures good results, an irrefutable fact, what possible plausible explanation can be given regarding the signal failure of what is called "moral law" to produce equally good results. If "by their fruits ye shall know them," how can society's moral laws as manifested in their social results pass muster in an impartial mind? Observe these laws in daily operation. Examine closely into the various branches of municipal and social economy, beginning with our police courts, whose docks are fed by the forlorn subjects of municipal correction: the drunkard, the petty thief, the disturber of public peace, and the "fallen woman"—that anomaly of a Christian civilisation—that walking sepulchre of all morality. Then pass to those higher courts, where the high priests of social "*virtue*" invent every device, exert

They are: (1) Not to kill; (2) not to steal; (3) not to commit adultery; (4) not to lie; (5) not to get intoxicated; (6) to abstain from unseasonable meals; (7) to abstain from public spectacles; (8) to abstain from expensive dress; (9) not to have a large bed; (10) not to receive silver and gold.

Here will be found admonitions of morality not foreign to those with which the Christian is familiar, and provision, as well, for that asceticism conspicuous in Buddha's life and doctrines.

every cunning to make of the witness stand a school of infamy (I do not say with such intent, but with such result unquestionably,) who, in the name of *Justice*, drag before a demoralised public the most indecent as well as the most delicate acts of intimate life. And all this, remember, in the name of VIRTUE! Then turn to the press, the mirror of the public mind, and contemplate those columns of reportorial moral comedy, the graphic, suggestive pictorials, the exaggerated handling of everything that can minister to sensationalism. Stand at the marriage altar, witness the heartless exchange of gold for title, and take its counterpart the divorce court—the disgraceful, disgusting, demoralising divorce court. Can it be imagined for an instant that laws rendering *possible* such immoral conditions should pass under the guise of "*Divine*"? Think you that a marriage institution so rotten, so worm-eaten, can claim a godly sanction? Think you society can go on for ever buying and selling such commodities as love, and then dumping it over in the divorce court when it ceases to amuse? Is this the kind of moral masquerading that befits a self-respecting, *divinely* governed people?

Certain of society's conventional leaders would suppress the divorce court; the

"mother" Church (after the time-honoured policy of suppressing effects and ignoring causes) refuses to recognise it. Thus the only remedy—bad as it is—that offers a relief in this most mutually desperate of moral situations would be denied! The biblical injunction "what God hath joined together let no man put asunder" would be discredited thereby and the authority of the Church weakened. But the situation itself, with all its degrading, soul-poisoning consequences! What of that? Is that a moral bagatelle?

But what (it is tacitly argued) are the miseries of an ill-sorted union when weighed in the balance against those laws which have been promulgated in the name of Divinity! Behold here the triumph of the wisdom of an embryonic society *without the guidance of spiritual law.* For what more is wanting to prove that the laws in question are not only non-spiritual, but are absolutely conducive to the very opposite of spirituality?

Would it not seem as if things had gotten much mixed in matters of law—human and Divine? The really and *only* Divine laws—susceptible of *proof* as such thus far through their immutability—are those possessed in the name of "science," but which are treated very

much as of human invention, since certain classes are afraid of them. Meanwhile, those whose lamentable fruits show their very finite origin are held up to us as Divine, and clung to despite all the discords and immoralities they entail.

Is not this what may be called logic *à rebours?*

Behold the laws of God! Set them over against the laws of man, and observe the distinction: The first are immutable, they cannot be violated without serious, perhaps fatal, consequences, whereas the last are violated with *impunity* every day. The first are the same to-day that they were at the beginning of time, as far as we are able to judge; the others are susceptible of modification from age to age; and not only that, but in the same age they may be variously interpreted by various sects and communities—each and all of such interpretations being promulgated in the "fear of the Lord," with the understanding that their violation must meet punishment at His hands.

But where is the proof that God wreaks "vengeance"?

On the contrary, "God" might be said to observe a silent, passive tolerance of man's puny, ignorant provisions in "His Holy

Name," or, when occasion offers, as it not unfrequently does, to give him the lie by practically refuting him.

And yet so steeped is humanity in its traditional superstitions and psychic stolidity, that all this accumulation of refuting *facts* arrayed against its scheme of creation and "Divine will" still stand almost as nothing for its enlightenment.

As the absurdities and discomforts of the modern situation force themselves upon contemporaneous minds, criticisms and despairing complaints multiply. One writer is persuaded that the social world is going to the devil headlong; another is not quite sure on the subject. He realises that the situation is bad, but if this class would do so and so, or some other class wouldn't do some other given thing, it might be possible to right matters. It all looks very dubious, however. "Degeneracy" is abroad!

This question of "classes" is a great bugbear. The question of equality or non-equality is another one. To judge by the quantity of ink that is shed over these very human and transitional questions, one might imagine that they were among the eternal principles of life, and had to be dealt with accordingly. Mean-

while there seems not to be a suspicion regarding the real, vital points at issue. It is always the living, palpitating forces that are at the bar of judgment; they it is who cause all this disquieting emotion. The organism, the *instrument* which *determines* their modes of action—their actual social manifestation—that is never thought of. Consequently, much astonishment is expressed at the general trend of society. Its worst features are looked upon as anomalous, inexplicable.

But believe me, dear reader, there is nothing in the spectacle offered by the world to-day that has not its perfect *raison d'être*. Looked at in its nakedness, without the glamour of sentimentalism or the benumbing influence of habit, every social abnormality which exists among us is explicable. No need of coming out in flaring headlines about some princely sinner, who is perhaps the instigator or initiator of a school in "crime against Nature." There is no such thing as crime against Nature. Every *possibility* is in nature, or it could not happen. When newspapers lack copy, crimes against Nature make interesting reading—keep up the subscription list, one of those many features of embryonic, individual interest which feed on collective wrongs.

Nature never stands still. She must either mount or descend ; and as at present Christian morality is at ebb-tide, Nature, in the guise of such morality, is descending, and her ghastly *sensual* shores are laid bare for our contemplation.

When you have said that, you have explained everything.

Every kind of moral perversion is now in the order of the day. No use of making a fuss about individual cases, and trumpeting soul-harrowing details to the four corners of the globe, as if something wonderful had happened—thus but encouraging the spirit of demoralisation.

A poor, ignorant woman has strangled her new-born babe. She is ignorant, it is true, and poor and abandoned, but she is not so ignorant that she fails to realise the *curse* that is upon her with her "illegitimate" offspring. Self-preservation—the first law of Nature—leads her to commit murder. And lo ! the human vultures, ready to tear her to shreds, both morally and physically ; the courts, the press, and that social bugbear "public opinion" all of one accord to annihilate this forlorn victim of *false social institutions*.

Spasms of virtue, in a *milieu* where these

things are passing *secretly* every day, and thousands of souls—born and unborn—are laid as a "burnt offering" on the altar of Moloch.

Verily, this picture of our boasted civilisation is dark. Let us draw the veil.

If I have reiterated argument and *insisted* upon facts in this study of *civilised* society, it is because of my overwhelming desire to penetrate the public mind with the *true* philosophy of conditions that are. Such disquieting realities are not to be met by vague sophistries or pessimistic lamentations. Be ye not persuaded that it is "backsliding" spirituality which is the cause of the world's turpitudes.

What, pray, is the value of a faith which fails to lift the soul effectually, integrally? *Restraint is not culture.* To abstain from an evil inclination may evidence strength of character, but that is virtue resting upon a contingency. The only reliable virtue is that which bears the stamp of character—that which is inherent in nature, consequently proof against moods and circumstances.

The vice of every religion that has ever existed is its shortcomings in this respect. But a cursory review of theological history will discover that each of these respective theological dresses amounts to little more than an

abstract cloak thrown over the spiritual shoulders of the unregenerate animal.

What can such a cloak amount to in any Cosmic sense? A man's faith, to be of any veritable worth, should regenerate him—make him fundamentally better, not superficially better, requiring constant supervision and propping up by disciplinary authority. A faith should invest one with *psychological resources —ennobling powers within,* thus permanently lifting human nature—for what is *nature is enduring.*

The supreme arraignment of the Church should be this, its lamentable deficiency. It claims much credit for the progress of the world; but the glaring facts which it is now throwing into the face of society as a reproach for its theological lukewarmness, but rebounds to its own condemnation.

Had the Church done its educational duty, the world would not now be groaning under the consequences of its relaxed authority.

Again, were it open to conviction on any point at variance with its fundamental policy, the Church would long since have perceived the profound fact evidenced in all nature—namely, that there is no security outside of inherent virtue, be the subject animate or in-

animate. From the ecclesiastical standpoint, however, such individual strength and independence would work general confusion, since it would upset the very basis of Church policy, which is individual helplessness, tutelage—hence the necessity of a confessor and a *Redeemer*. The soul that needs a "Redeemer" can never escape Churchly jurisdiction. In such avowed helplessness it is as effectually anchored to the priestly altar as though it were physically enchained thereto.

When, therefore, the altar and the priest chance to go down—to lose their symbolic meaning—lo! the spiritual disaster which follows in their wake. The poor mortal reeds, who were never taught, *never allowed* to stand alone, are now toppling over in every disorderly direction—every suppressed passion seizing upon its opportunity for expression. Review these rehearsals of the disintegrating drama all through history. Look at the decline of Egyptian theology; look at the transitional periods in Greece and Rome. See how men went mad when the "restraining" gods had fallen. Or if, on the other hand, the gods do not fall—if a theology is not progressive enough to make them fall, in the sense of disappearing (as is the case in the Far East), then men

become, as it were, hypnotised by their gods and there sets in a sort of *spiritual petrifaction.* The great sign of collective progress, therefore, is the "fall of civilisations"—in other words, the fall of "religions."

Discourse not, then, of growing spiritual laxity and moral turpitude, O ye leaders of the Church: the mere admission of such a state as consequent upon your decline is the most serious of self-condemnation! Humanity has been in your hands as clay in the hands of the potter. Is it after all these centuries of tutelage so utterly devoid of the principles of rectitude that it cannot be trusted to a modicum of self-direction? Do you thus virtually establish the theory of an eternal state of moral infancy and spiritual helplessness among the children of men?

An institution of profane learning—a college which should render like service—would be considered a failure. When a man graduates from an institution of intellectual culture he is expected to give proof in his practical career of the value of his tuition. But he may come from his catechism, after years of "instruction," as empty spiritually as a Hottentot, and nothing is thought of it. Why? What is the difference? Is the difference hard to discover?

It is this: The curriculum of the profane student is based on the rational necessities of his practical life; his mind is trained and directed in lines of useful facts—in real knowledge of the world's treasures; whereas, on the other hand, the mind of the "religious" student is charged with a mass of unreal, unrealisable, imaginary philosophy, which he is unable to appropriate or to make any practical use of whatever, and which, if he retains at all, he must do so by persistent memorising; although in fact, as it bears in no degree upon his practical life, he makes haste to forget it.

With such pointless, stultifying spiritual instruction in childhood, what do you, what can you, expect of the man? You send him out into the world *without a single robust principle,* and then you moralise on his proneness to evil and fain would condemn him to sackcloth and ashes in atonement for your own ignorance. May you not appropriately be addressed in the words of St. John to the Church of Sardis: "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead"!

Is it not happy that spiritual teaching of such character is coming to an end? And be assured that it is coming to an end, whatever may actually appear on the surface. The social

observer will easily detect the beneficent presence of that evolutionary genius whose magic touch, as it glides along through the centuries, is bringing order out of our moral chaos. Its presence to-day is manifest in the multiple little ameliorations taking place in the condition of the weak and the lowly (true efforts towards spirituality)—protection of the interests of the labourer, protection for the humble mothers—those brave creators of the race, whose lot has ever been so hard; provision for the helplessness of age; the *crèche*—a thought for the helpless young; and, finally, and most significant of growth, perhaps, the awakening of mankind to a sense of the absurdity (to express it mildly) of State or municipal vengeance.*

* As an example of the advance in this line which has taken place during the last sixty years, an episode regarding "capital punishment," in which Victor Hugo played a part, is worthy of note: In 1851 Hugo's son Charles was prosecuted before *La Cour d'assises* because of an article in *L'Événement* "*Contre la peine de mort.*" The distinguished father undertook his son's defence, but the offender was none the less condemned to six months' imprisonment and five hundred francs fine. To-day this same question—pro and con—is publicly and fearlessly discussed in the French Parliament.

So much for a glance backward. Suppose we take one in the opposite direction. To-day "anti-militarism" *is a crime.* Men are imprisoned for it. In less than sixty years it will have become a virtue, and that military defence *à outrance* which is now absorbing the wealth of the world will scarcely be credited.

While we are in the vein of contrasting collective mental states

But of all of these beneficent collective efforts, the most far-reaching, unquestionably, is that which is being done for the young. Here it is that our present interest should centre. The adult is finished, in a sense, for good or bad; his educational work is accomplished. Radical

at different epochs, it is fitting to remark, that punishment—the proper mode of disposing of society's moral pariahs—is growing more and more an embarrassing question. It would seem as if an instinctive shame were developing itself among men regarding the existence of this class and their treatment hitherto. It is not known how exactly to dispose of them. To let "crime" stalk about with impunity doesn't seem just the proper thing, and to cut off its head doesn't exactly rhyme with progress either. So it is not known what to do in face of the perplexities of the situation. One set of law-makers vote the guillotine up, and another set of law-makers vote it down. Finally, as a dire resource, there is *travaux forcés à perpépuité*, which for the culprit means: have as good time as you can while watching your chance to escape and re-begin again. The game is apparently desperate whichever way you choose to play it. Meanwhile society, very logically, goes on producing the criminal—to the constantly increasing confusion of our "statesmen." The thousands and thousands and millions of gold swallowed up yearly in providing *punishment* for these social failures offers a fair example of the sum of collective wisdom attained thus far in our "advanced" civilisation.

As is held by many, *travaux forcés à perpépuité*, if effectually carried out, would be the most atrocious of punishments. Death would be far preferable, and far more humane if we could but regard it in its true light. Why, in the name of logic and justice —justice to society and justice to the victim himself—prolong an existence so spiritually rotten? The death-giving should not be spectacular, certainly, nor should it be by actual brutal methods. But the suppression of imperfection of every kind ought to be society's ambition. (What a true instinct was manifested by the æsthetic Greeks in this respect!) The fact is our present shrinking from the mysterious *dénouement* of death is attributable principally to our superstitions concerning the hereafter. It is

change here is improbable. But the children—those precious promises of the future—the youths whose physical and moral bones are yet unhardened, with whom you can perform miracles if you know how, these should be the real subjects of social interest, where every possible device should be practised with a view to *normal* spiritual, intellectual, and physical development.

And it is through these little ones—fresh from Mother Nature—that you will find your way to a comprehension of the "spiritual laws."

How many beautiful intuitions of the Bible come to mind in this connection: "The lion and the lamb shall lie down together, and a little child shall lead them." "And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and sat him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye become converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of

"religion" that is at the bottom of it all, and it is also religion that permits—encourages—that masquerading of priest and condemned at death's door.

Why store up these moral sores, these spiritual lepers, parking hem in masses—a spiritual microbe-culture—generating and propagating their poisons interminably? Is it to give them a chance to "prepare for that other world, which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive"?

Heaven." "Suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto Me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

There is a profound meaning in these intuitions recorded of Christ. He, of course, did not analyse them, but His "Divine nature" seems to have recognised its own in the soul of the child.

Who has not remarked the *justice* as well as the *guilelessness* of a child's intuitions! How it gives to words their literal meaning; how it takes men at their apparent value—little suspecting the prevarication, hypocrisy, and falseness current in the world till brought in wondering contact with it. "He is unacquainted with the ways of the world," we tritely observe; and then we proceed to acquaint him with this false "worldly wisdom" in order that the fresh, guileless soul may learn to circulate unhurt among its fellow-men. It is the worldly breastplate, as indispensable to the protection of the peaceful social unit as were the breastplates of steel in the past for the protection of the warrior. It is, in fact, a question of war in both cases with a simple change of weapon. And both cases are predominant features in the social policy of Christendom.

The unperverted soul *must* reveal its *normal*

modes of action. And it would certainly be a revelation—the spectacle of normal beauty which would be produced by a generation of youths developed under *natural* conditions. To be sure, such conditions are wellnigh unsupposable in the world with which we are familiar; still, an effort in this direction might be made, and will be made, sooner or later.

And the first step in such effort will be the creation of an atmosphere of LOVE. We must let the warm SUN of AFFECTION sink down into the depths of the moral soil we would cultivate, if we hope to have our labours bear fruit. Then appeals will be made to ambition—to the sentiment of *moral emulation*—directing every influence towards the highest and best in the young imagination. Fear, in any shape, should never be suggested to the very young. Fear is paralysing, contracting; it is the iceberg of the spirit, and should never be suggested to the *unequilibrated* imagination of a child. Nor should the *normal* child ever hear of "punishment." Let the young individual, as does the old one, punish itself. There is no more effective punishment than that which we inflict upon ourselves—in other words, that which is inflicted upon us by circumstances of our own making—the perception of which truth has

already found vulgar expression in the familiar maxim: "Give a man rope enough and he'll hang himself." * The policy in dealing with youth should be to develop *intelligent* independence of action; keeping the idea of superior control as inconspicuous as possible. Teach the child to use its moral faculties as you now teach it to use its legs. Let it topple over if it must. Soften the fall if need be; but let it pick itself up again. The falls will thus become less frequent, and each fall will prove a wholesome lesson.

Finally, the great principle to inculcate in the mind of the educator, as well as in that of the educated, is that to which allusion has

* The criminal, we have often occasion to observe, is his own Nemesis. A man exasperated by the representations of a vain, vicious woman, shoots another, thinking to gain distinction for bravery thereby, and he gains a madman's cell. A woman (again vain and vicious) murders both husband and mother. So heinous, so unbelievable is the crime that no one dares fix it upon her. She would go free were she not goaded on by her evil genius. But conscious of a vague, silent accusation hanging over her, she feels that somebody must be held responsible for the crime, and in her insane efforts to fix it upon others, she fixes it irrevocably upon herself.

The *criminal is insane!* All moral turpitude is insanity, and should be so treated. What, however, would not be the protests of orthodoxy were it proposed to reverse the biblical maxim, making it read: "The normal man is as prone to good as the sparks are to fly upward"—notwithstanding the fact that to say otherwise ought, in all logic, to be considered an insult to God, man's Creator.

already been made—namely, that *no virtue is of any lasting value which has not its source within.* It avails nothing to say to a child, "You *must* not do thus and so." Physical hedges avail not in questions of moral safety. Consequently, the only true "chaperon" is the one ever present—carried in the soul. It is the refined taste, the noble purpose, the high sentiment of *self-respect.* These are the guardians—invisible, intangible though they be—whose authority is indisputable, and against whom a host of tempters could not prevail.

A generation of such culture, such youthful development, would astonish the world, and by its moral results supply data for psychic research not yet conceived of.

CHAPTER V

COLLECTIVE DESTINY

> "*How sweet a scene will earth become—*
> *Of purest spirits a pure dwelling-place,*
> *Symphonious with the planetary spheres—*
> *When man with changeless Nature coalescing,*
> *Will undertake regeneration's work!*"
>
> —SHELLEY.

> "*For the earth shall be full of a knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*"
>
> —ISAIAH xi. 9.

OUR effort in the foregoing presentation has been to show the intimate relation which must exist between a civilisation and its religion.

The treatment has necessarily been rapid—far too much so, I admit, for such an immense field of study. But, as stated at the outset, the aim here is not to be exhaustive. Indeed, such an undertaking on such a subject would defy the powers of the present generation, as well as of those of many to come, probably. The requisite data is still unpossessed, and our mental horizon is still too limited to permit of a worthy handling of a subject which is as far-reaching as is human destiny. Of necessity,

then, the individual ambition in so vast a field must be modest. In the present case the aim has been simply to cast upon the waters of the great social current a few thoughts which, perchance, "after many days," may return again, in the shape of other thoughts in other brains—speeding the way to fresh points of view on these vital questions now pressing for solution.

The main purpose here is to bring into relief the fact that a religion and its resulting civilisation are ONE: that the last has grown out of the first, and that, consequently, the surest indication of a civilisation's "fall" is the weakening of its theological authority. It is important to show, furthermore, that, since theology commonly stands for religion, when the one is proven defective the other becomes likewise a subject of suspicion, entailing the various disintegrating moral phenomena (consequent upon its weakened influence), which give rise to those pessimistic ideas so characteristic of social transitional phases, and which would present mankind in the light of hopeless degeneracy.

We know that the ill body often has to get "worse" to get better; but we fail to perceive the analogy in the case of moral illness.

Because, it cannot be too often repeated, we are wanting in that synthetic outlook which would take in the whole situation and thus enable us to distinguish between what is inherent, permanent, and what is simply transitional.

And yet—this is an essential point—the great aim of Humanity, if it would achieve enduring work, should be to gain a comprehensive evolutionary view of its *meaning* on the earth. Man was surely put here for *some purpose*. Whence has he come? where is he now (in evolutionary significance)? and whither is he tending?

To the first inquiry science has brought much in the way of elucidation. Studies in comparative philology, archæological and ethnological researches—all these have tended to open up immense vistas down the aisles of the past, every fresh glimpse tending to confirm a long growing conviction in the mind of the Western student that "the Lord hath made of one blood" all the nations of the earth, and that through the multiple ramifications of ancient history can be traced—with a clearness which keeps pace with advancing knowledge—the universal UNITY of the world's religious sentiment. "What is now called the Christian

religion," said St. Augustine, "has existed among the ancients, and was not absent from the beginning of the human race until Christ came in the flesh; from which time the true religion, which existed already, began to be called Christian. And again, in the words of Max Müller: "But, more surprising than the continuity in the growth of language, is the continuity in the growth of religion. Of religion, too, as of language, it may be said, that in it everything new is old, and everything old is new; and that there has been no entirely new religion since the beginning of the world."

Humanity's leading intuitions find their expression in every tongue, and the very diversity of forms given to this sentiment through divers theologies are but as stamps of mental differentiation. It is ever the same internal-intuitional presented in the varied dress of these countless varieties of external-rational manifestation. In another half-century, doubtless, we shall reconstitute this branch of the historic past as accurately as we now reconstitute the prehistoric fossil remains which are the wonders of our natural history museums.

So much for the past. As to the present—the civilisation we have at hand—there is much less pretence to certainty or even curiosity.

Indeed, it may be assumed that there is no *ambition* for certainty regarding the present. It is recognised as an actuality and tolerated *per force;* but the idea of seeking in it any evolutionary meaning seems far from the thoughts of the ordinary scientist—and that for the simple reason that Humanity's evolutionary chain on this earth is yet unconstituted. It is but upon its disjointed links that we have been working thus far, hence the fragmentary, haphazard, *blind following of fate* which has thus far distinguished us—operating "against lines of least resistance"—a fact whose recognition, probably, suggested to our modern thinkers their system of creation.

Now, the query arises, Is there no possible escape from this shadowy uncertainty? Is there no clue, no key within reach of the present which is going to unlock the future? If we could seize upon something of the future, we should better understand the present; and if we possessed a map of "destiny," we should understand it all—both present and future.

It will have been remarked in the course of this work that there have been repeated references to destiny—"*Higher Collective Destiny.*" That, in fact, is the one idea which has inspired the work. To criticise a theology, to point

out the defects in a civilisation, is of small moment to-day, when all creeds are crumbling, when "orthodoxy" itself is constantly putting on new dress and straining every nerve to maintain a ground which has become like a dissolving quicksand, and where the old social order is on the borders of bankruptcy.

Again, criticism should never be offered in a spirit of reproach, as if to hold some one responsible. No one individual, or class of individuals, can be held responsible for either the good or the bad which exists. What is, and has been, exists, or has existed, by virtue of the moral and intellectual *level* of the *collectivity,* and becomes a part of history for what it is worth. We have had centuries of criticism —cruel, heartrending, fleshrending criticism. Inevitable! But the want of to-day is construction, not destruction.

Humanity *needs* to be inspired, lifted up with fresh hope, given a new FAITH in the great overshadowing "Providence" which has led—not only the Children of Israel—but the whole of mankind through the wilderness of ignorance and brutality and undevelopment on its way to the "Promised Land."

If it must be admitted that, like Moses of old, we of the present are forbidden the hope

of a personal vision of that Promised Land, we are none the less a part of the great family bound thitherward, and as such may share in the glory of its perception, as well as lend our mite toward bringing about its realisation.

And where is that Promised Land? What means such a suggestion to this realistic age?

It means simply the achievement of Humanity's ultimate destiny, whatever that may signify, in the yet unrevealed future. It means the arrival of that compound-organic stage of society where, in fulness of knowledge of the laws of the universe, man shall have applied them in the harmonic development of his material and spiritual existence on this globe.

If at this point a question shall be interposed regarding the effect of such philosophy upon our belief in a super-terrestrial life, I would answer, None whatever. Destiny *after* death is an entirely different question—on which we are incapable of speaking at present, since thereon we know *absolutely* nothing, and it must be believed *should know nothing* in our actual state, inasmuch as knowledge in that realm is still withheld from us.

But have we not fully enough to engage our attention for the moment right here on our

little globe? "How can we pretend," said the logical Confucius, "to know anything of heaven, when it is already so difficult to arrive at a clear idea of what is going on on the earth?" Unquestionably, it is upon the earth that man's serious attention should first be fixed if ever he would aspire to arrive at a worthy conception of "the Beyond." It is in his growth upon the one that he will render himself capable of just and commensurate ideas of the other; for there is not a shadow of a doubt that when men shall have risen to the altitude of such a comprehension, the reality will be found to be as far above present powers of conception as is the intellect of man above that of infancy.

But what of religion meanwhile? you will insist. What place is religion to hold in that compound-organic stage in which Humanity is to achieve its destiny?

History establishes the fact that it is the spiritual side of man which has determined the form of his collective life in every case hitherto. As have been man's conceptions of God, so have been modelled the systems of his practical existence. That eternal mentor —the internal-intuitional—has ever inspired, impelled upward, while the external-rational

has but executed. Could it be expected, then, that the highest form of social organisation would form an exception to the universal rule?

It cannot be denied, however, that the spirit of our age would seem to give colouring to such a suggestion. Many of our would-be leaders appear bent on persuading the world of the triviality of religion's foundation. Derisive allusion is made to the "paradoxical conception of God as a gaseous vertebrate"; or it is argued that the idea of God is but an evolution from association with death and the tomb—"foolish customs of corpse worship."

Historically, these strange accounts of the spiritual manifestations of different peoples are interesting. It is edifying to follow, through them, the various and gradual development of Humanity; but to attempt to point an argument therefrom for the destruction of belief in a spiritual world, *which is as real as is the material world,* is ridiculous, not to say monstrous. All these puerile rites and customs now being exposed by "scientists" and flaunted in the face of a credulous Humanity as proof of the non-existence of a God and the vanity of religion but show the profundity of that intuition which the "materialists" aim to deny. Every fact which they so proudly

present as a weapon on their side serves really as testimony on the side of spiritual intuition. What but that spiritual intuition could ever have given birth to the spiritual conceptions of the world? And what, pray, would be the case were it otherwise? Could we blot out of human experience all its religious past (in no matter what form), what would be man's actual condition to-day—what the *bilan* of progress? Animals of more or less intelligence we have all about us; we know of what they are capable. Man is an animal, plus his spiritual nature: that which gives him his moral tone, that which gives him his inspiration, that which has ever been his beacon-light through the mazes of the unknown.

Furthermore, what for an unspiritual Humanity would have been the civilising lever? How would the masses have been controlled and marshalled socially without spirituality? In short, what but "Divine authority" could ever have held peoples together and wielded those great national unities which have made progress possible?

Nothing! Had men been limited to purely material, visible, tangible means of control in the affairs of state, they never would have

emerged from the vulgar brutality of a common horde; for where brute force rules, upon brutal level, it is with brutal results.

Nothing is more evident in the whole history of human development than this supreme Cosmic provision for the dominating and leading of primitive man *through his spiritual nature.*

It would be absurd, of course, to look for superiority in that nature during its long, crude, benighted pilgrimage; it had always to express itself as best it could: stones, trees, departed ancestors, the powerful chieftain—no matter what, so it appealed to the imagination and supplied the wants of these early spiritual glimmerings. Every one of them had its value. And all this absurdity, coarseness, cruelty revealed by history shows, as more than once stated here, but the different evolutionary stages at which mankind had attained in the course of its long social gestation. We, of later generations, think we can afford to look *down* on that past. It is "grotesque," "unbelievable," and the like. The fact is, we stand too near to ourselves to properly appreciate our own veritable state, and are consequently in blissful unconsciousness of our own grotesqueness on similar lines.

Did not a nineteenth century philosopher and *scientist* dream also of "ancestor-worship," and did he not call his ancestor-worship "The Religion of Humanity"? And did he not make a school?

Really, considering the difference of time, the advantage of accumulated experience—our artistic and intellectual refinements, together with the immense scientific revelations that have come to our aid in the solution of universal questions—we are in many respects inferior to the very savage we criticise. Note the reverence with which primitive man associates himself with Nature. From the Egyptian to the Chinese may be observed this disposition on the part of the early agriculturist to make of the tilling of the soil a sacred rite, linking it in with his noblest ideas and sentiments. To the primitive, every act of life had a universal meaning, and as far back as historic records reach will Humanity be found associating itself in song and in act with the mysterious "cause" of things.

Here is a most significant hint in the direction of compound-organic destiny: where Humanity began brutally, blindly, it knew not why, to associate itself reverently with the universe, it will finish intelligently, *grandly,*

in the full consciousness of the sublimity of its Cosmic *rôle*.

"The Science of Religion," writes Max Müller, "may be the last of the sciences which man is destined to elaborate, but when it is elaborated it will change the aspect of the world."

CHAPTER VI

THE FINAL THEOLOGY

> "*There is a song now singing;*
> *Catch but its sweet beginning,*
> *And you will still its notes prolong;*
> *For ever, ever learning,*
> *Yet never quite discerning,*
> *The deep, full meaning of the song.*"

YES, the "science of religion" will indeed "change the aspect of the world." And it must necessarily be the last of the sciences to be elaborated, since the religion of the future, the ultimate and final religion of mankind, must embrace all the sciences.

When we think of an *ultimate* religion, what idea does such thought invoke? What is the highest possible conception to-day of man's final expression of his Cosmic aspiration?—a religion the completeness of which our actual powers of mind cannot transcend.

Such a religion, immense as it must seem, is not beyond the present grasp of Humanity. Indeed, it may appear so simple at first blush as to be rejected. Yet you will not be able

to put it away. A few decades ago it might have been done, for reasons unnecessary to cite now. But to-day, no! The proposition is too simple, too natural; it will appear too self-evident to the intelligent mind—the mind already set to the rhythm of universal principles.

Let us see, then, to what extent the subject can be handled on veritably scientific ground.

Returning to the analysis of religion given in the first part of this work, there will be found to enter therein three distinct factors: first, the intuition—the inherent sentiment born with us; second, the theology—a finite explanation of such intuition; third, the worship—a practical expression of the intuition.

Of the first, which is purely internal-intuitional, enough has been said. Despite any semblance of change, it is always virtually the same, be the social stage in which it is manifested embryonic, simple-organic, or compound-organic. But the second being, as has been shown, purely external-rational—hence human—is continually changing.

That it should not change—should not be amenable to change—and that Humanity feels this fact, and has ever struggled to make the *theory* of the intuition as everlasting as is the

intuition itself, is apparent in all theologies. No matter how absurd, how antiquated and glaringly inadequate to their purpose, still are they clung to, so long as there may be found in them a foothold (a church-hold).

Now any sentiment that is universal among mankind must be admitted to be of universal meaning. What is the meaning of this persistent, ofttimes quite desperate, defence of worn-out creeds? They really do no good; they sometimes do great harm—in the shape of stumbling-blocks; and certain features of their imperfection are not unfrequently quite apparent to their defenders even.

Why their defence, then, in the face of all logic? What is its meaning?

Putting aside the details of material interests, habits, and customs, which are but the mill-stones of the simple-organic soul, let us meet the question squarely, on universal ground. There we at once recognise, however dimly, the sentiment of *eternity* which man must ever associate with religion. And this sentiment may be taken as the instructive foreshadowing of that new, and *truly* everlasting theology, which is to come.

Do you ask: What is that theology? Can there be a moment's hesitation to-day regard-

ing what is to be man's ultimate guide in his Cosmic aspirations?

There should not, surely, be a doubt on the subject!

As far as the present argument is concerned, every thought here expressed has had behind it this one sublime idea, that the final theology of mankind is to be evolved from the laws of order and harmony in the universe.

Such a theology, and such only, can be worthy a race of universal aspiration—a race which is destined to "KNOW God."

What, then, from this higher point of view, is to be humanity's practical expression of its sentiment of unity with the Cosmos?

Thus far man's worship has had but little meaning beyond the symbolising of special creeds. Among the ancients there were certain glimmerings worthy remark, but the Christian's forms of worship have more and more become "as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." Naturally, they partake of the general character of the Church, which touches not the intimate, practical life of the individual. "We say, 'Divine service will be performed,'" writes Ruskin in his "Crown of Wild Olive." "Alas! unless we perform Divine service in every willing act of our lives, we never perform it at all."

What, then, we repeat, is to be that Divine service which shall be performed in every willing act of our lives? What can be conceived of as the superlative in this sphere? What shall be the nature of that worship which is to enable Humanity to *serve* Divinity in every act, thus entitling it to the *rôle* of *co-worker* with the universe, and giving to "worship" a real meaning?

As the laws of the universe are to constitute the theology of man's final religion, so will his *highest collective labour* constitute his ultimate form of worship.

What would naturally be that highest collective labour?

If we cast an appreciative glance over the globe at present, the answer ought to be spontaneous. Observe our deserts, with their wasting sands; our morasses, filled with reptiles; our jungles, filled with beasts of prey; consider the limitless expanse of unkempt surface which our earth presents in many regions; consider the violence of our thwarting air-currents, the alternating of scorching droughts and drenching rains; consider the myriad climatic disturbances continually opposing the purposes of man, and reducing by a large fraction the legitimate profits of human effort.

Can we look upon all this and not realise that Humanity's collective labour still awaits it? Would not all this be changed if we were heartily convinced of its necessity?

It cannot be denied that this globe in its actual state must present rather a scrubby appearance in the celestial family. Its surface has not begun to approach that degree of cultivation worthy to rank it with the musical spheres of which grand old Pythagoras used to dream; nor has man, the inhabitant thereof, yet taken the first step toward bringing about intelligently a better condition of things.

On the contrary, for his own *temporary,* selfish purposes he has denuded the mountain-ranges—destroying in a generation those mighty forest monarchs, natural protectors of the earth's surface, that would require decades of generations to replace, to say nothing of his various other depredations. By his ignorant handiwork he has aggravated a state which he has done nothing to ameliorate; or the little he may claim to have done, thus far, in the way of modifying crude conditions, has been done through limited, personal motives.

Now, the earth's Cosmic significance, if it has any (and how could it exist were it otherwise?), must be centred in, and suppose, a high

state of development. One would say that the old monks of the Middle Ages had caught a faint glimpse of this when they said, "To labour is to pray."

"Blind Nature" did her part faithfully up to man. She prepared the way for him. She made his life possible here by clearing up the atmosphere, stocking his little home—inside and out—with the elements requisite to his needs; furnishing him, in short, a Cosmic workshop. Then she left *him* to do the rest. And how has he done it? Like a thoughtless schoolboy he has rushed to and fro after the satisfactions of an hour, completely ignoring his Divine charge. When he was not breaking up his "tools," he was generally using them to wrong purpose, and then, again schoolboy-like, blaming Nature for his own shortcomings.

No wonder, in view of the uncomfortable situation, his chief thought has been to escape from such a disorderly dwelling to imaginative regions, where his *intuition of excellence* would finally be realised.

Such escape, however, does not appear to be in Nature's scheme. There is a vast labour to be accomplished on this planet to render it a fit member of the great brotherhood of spheres; and it is very evident that man was

put here to do it. He has thought that he was put here simply to prepare for heaven, but that was surely a mistake, since every "realising sense" of that place is withheld from him. It is *here* that he has been put, and it is here that everything seems to point to his first duty.

His evident task is to bring about that glad day when "the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose," and the refined atmospheres of the globe—which will bring forth a higher type of Humanity—shall give back to the universe some of those magnetisms upon which its life has, no doubt, been depending during the æons gone by.

This grand work it is—when the armies which now go forth to kill and destroy will go forth to reclaim and to build up, whose labours shall bring beauty and harmony out of chaos—this it is which is to be the grand Cosmic "service" that will constitute Humanity's compound-organic worship.

It is easy to understand that so vast a spiritual horizon will seem overwhelming to many, while others may very naturally regard it as a violation of all worthy conception of the meaning of *religion*. "Religion" has been so indissolubly linked with super-terrestrial

miraculous phenomena that anything short of such, and savouring of common-sense, may be taken as a libel on our spiritual nature. But, while this state of mind is fully accounted for under existing conditions, it will need but an honest effort, after clearing away the obscuring clouds of superstition and prejudice, to enable the gaze of mankind to fix itself willingly and fearlessly upon this new horizon.

The " centre of gravity " of the collective soul will then change. Instead of a one-sided, *geocentric* spirituality, indifferent to all outside of its earthly domain, there will come a grand enthusiasm for a broader Cosmic outlook and a worthy comprehension of Humanity's universal significance in " the beautifully-ordered whole."

Man has really no idea yet of the glories awaiting him here on earth—so intent has he been on gaining a glimpse of heaven. In pursuit of the unattainable, imaginary paradise, but the product of finite brain, he has become dazed, as it were, by his *subjective* vision.

It is quite fair to assume that, but for the physical sciences—the practical experiments carried on in Nature's great laboratory (which cannot be refuted)—man's benighting superstitions would have retarded progress for many

years still. Is it not a fact that but for the savage fanaticism of the sixteenth century, which so cruelly extinguished the too-advanced mind of the great Spanish "heretic" Servetus, Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood would have been anticipated by some sixty-three years? So great was the demoniacal spirit of "religion" at that epoch that but three copies of Servetus's remarkable work, "Christianismi Restitutio," are said to have escaped the general bonfire. And it is quite probable that none but the very boldest dared at the time to even glance at such a *dangerous* book.

At last, however, the obstructing theological crust is broken; men are beginning to *dare* to open their intellectual eyes. And what do they behold?

To begin with, an unlimited material future —possibilities of physical power (revealed through constant discovery: the revelations of radium and kindred wonders undreamed of a few years ago), which are coming to be incalculable. The pulse of the visible world is throbbing with a new force, and vistas are opening up beyond the conception of mortals in any previous age. And with these revelations, pointing to a more exalted material destiny, must mingle visions of a spiritual destiny

equally superior to all previous systems of philosophy—when a glorified Humanity shall have risen to a full comprehension of the *universality* of COSMIC LAW.

Then creeds and fantastic beliefs will fall away. There will then be no more discordant differences in Cosmic interpretation, and the various Bibles of the various peoples will be universally understood; for Humanity will then know that they are all but finite expressions of the *one* eternal Cosmic intuition.

The old traditional keys, said to have been entrusted to Peter, will then be found to have changed their nature—the finite will have become Infinite, the sectarian symbol be transformed into universal principle; and from the hands of a single individual, bound to pass away, these sacred keys will have been transferred to those collective hands which do not pass away, but go on from age to age unlocking the successive doors which are finally to open upon the real Paradise—HUMANITY'S COLLECTIVE DESTINY.

Thus, in the LAWS of the UNIVERSE will Humanity finally recognise the veritable

CELESTIAL KEYS.

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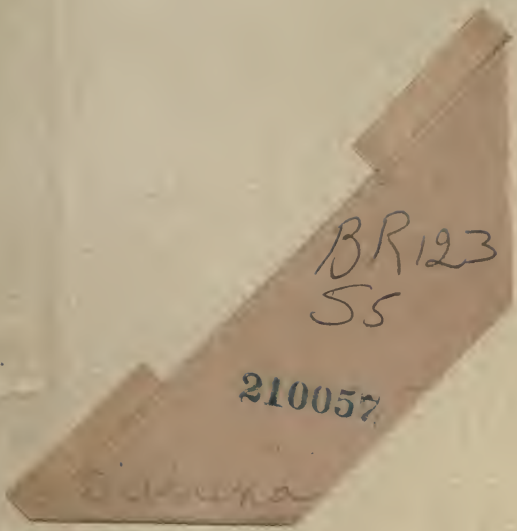
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